Part Three of a Five – Issue Limited Series

THOUGHTS & IMAGES

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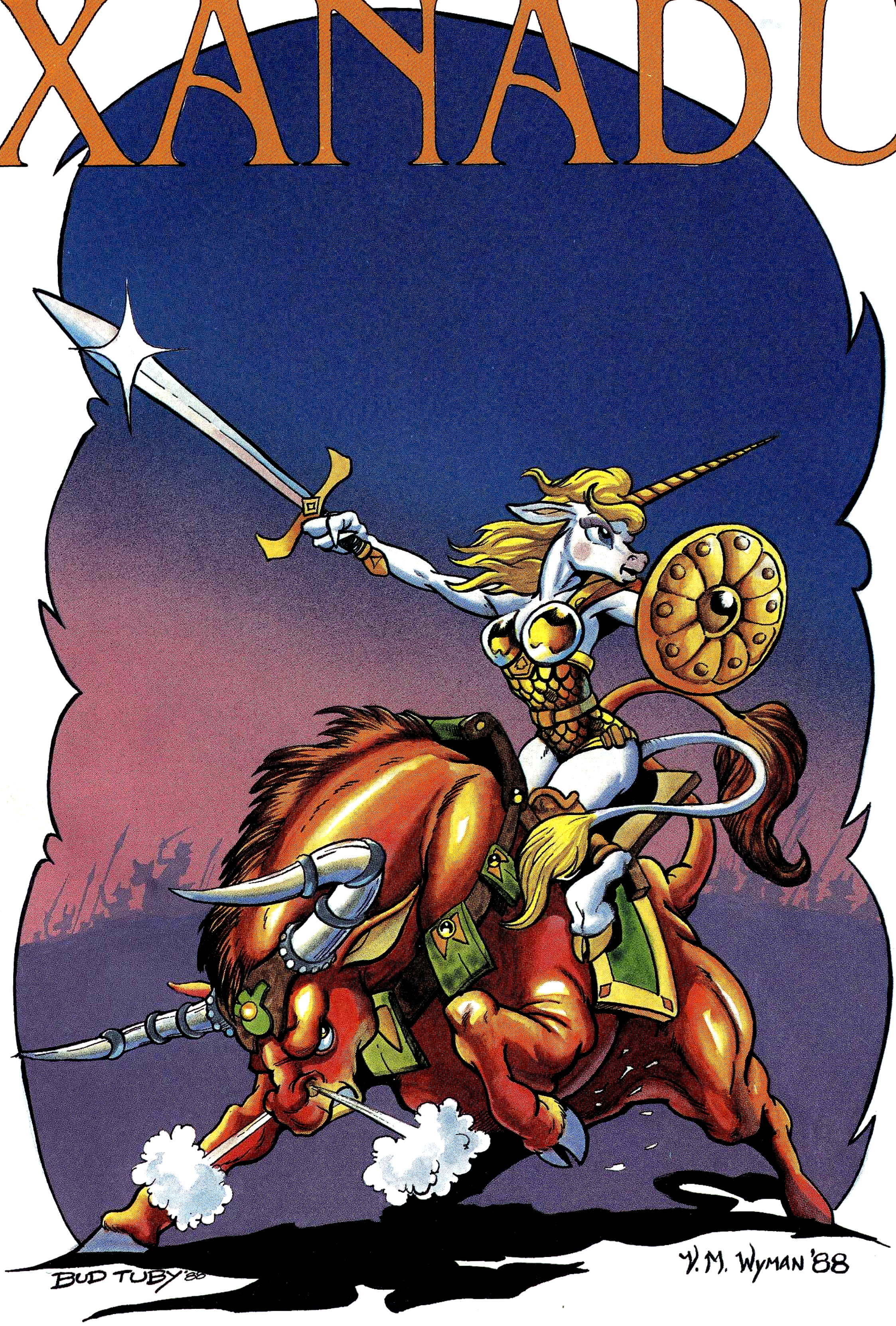
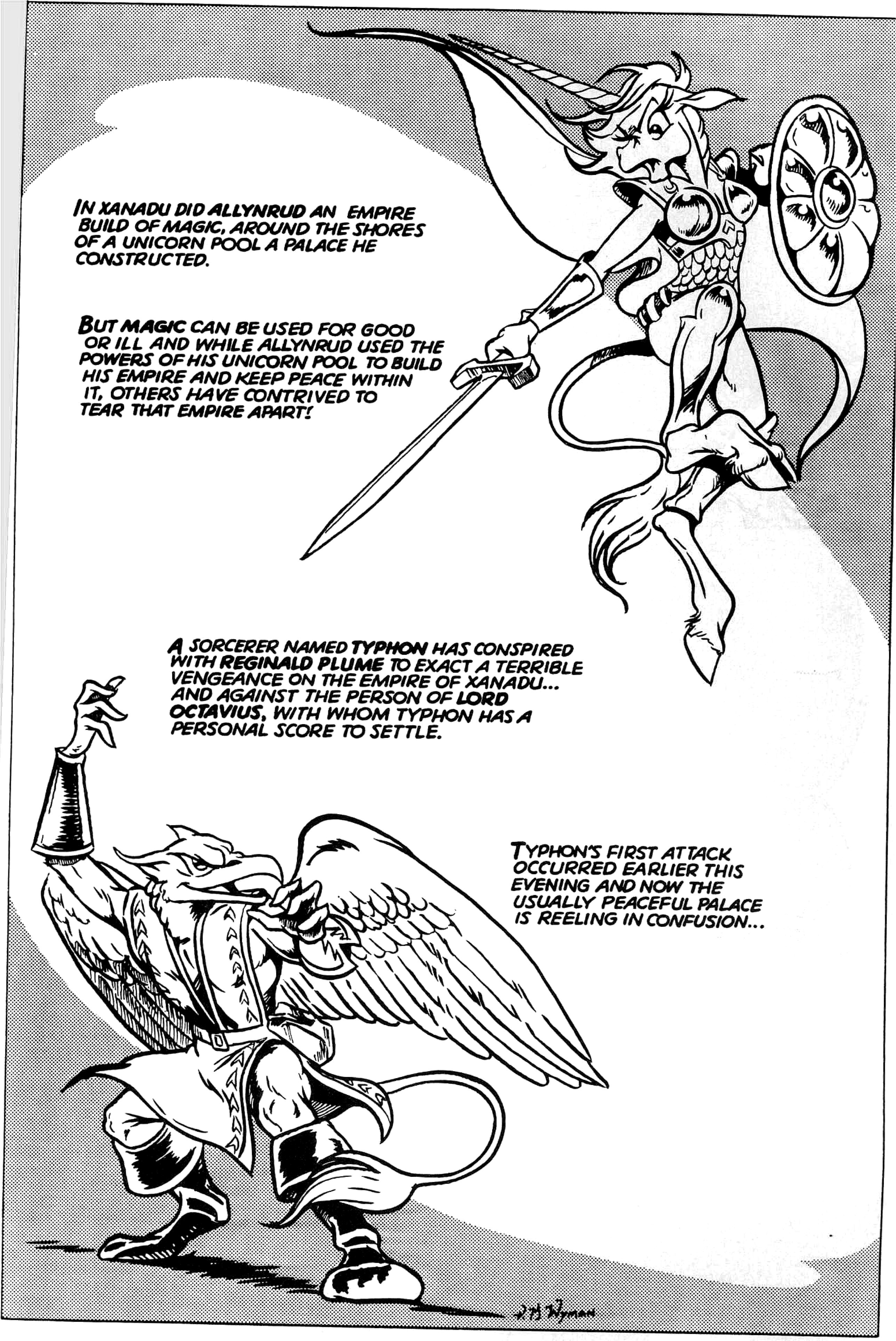
XANADU





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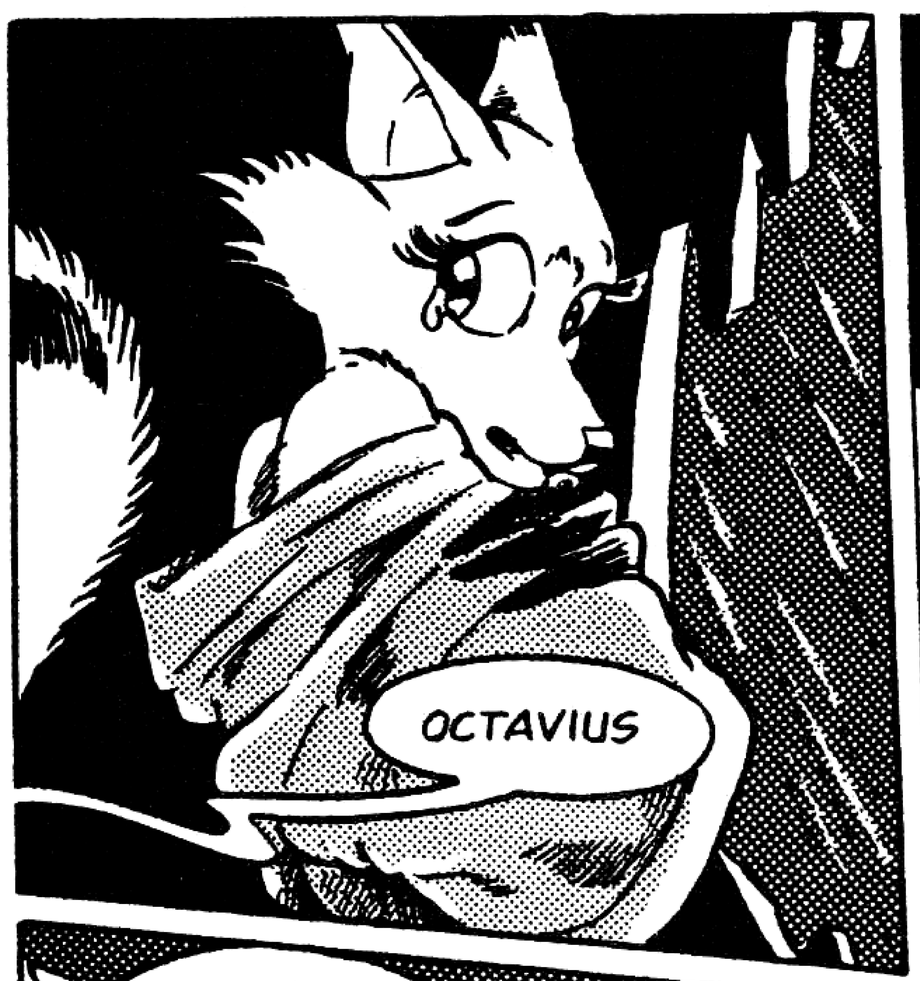
Story and Art: Vicky Wyman Lettering: Wayne Truman Editor: Axel Shaikman

ALICIA! OCTAVIUS!
... MY GODS ...


OCTAVIUS

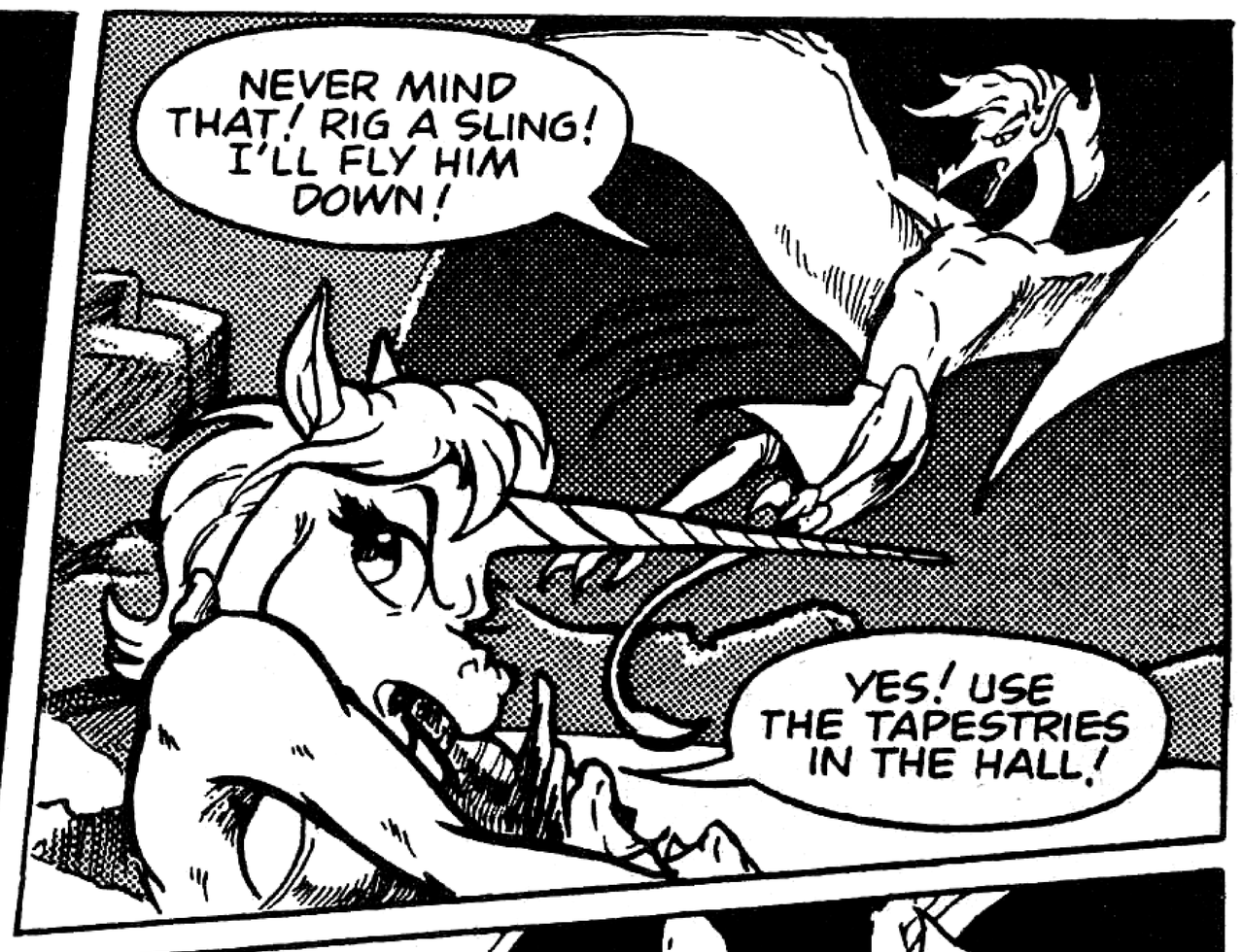
OH, OCTAVIUS...
IS HE ALIVE?

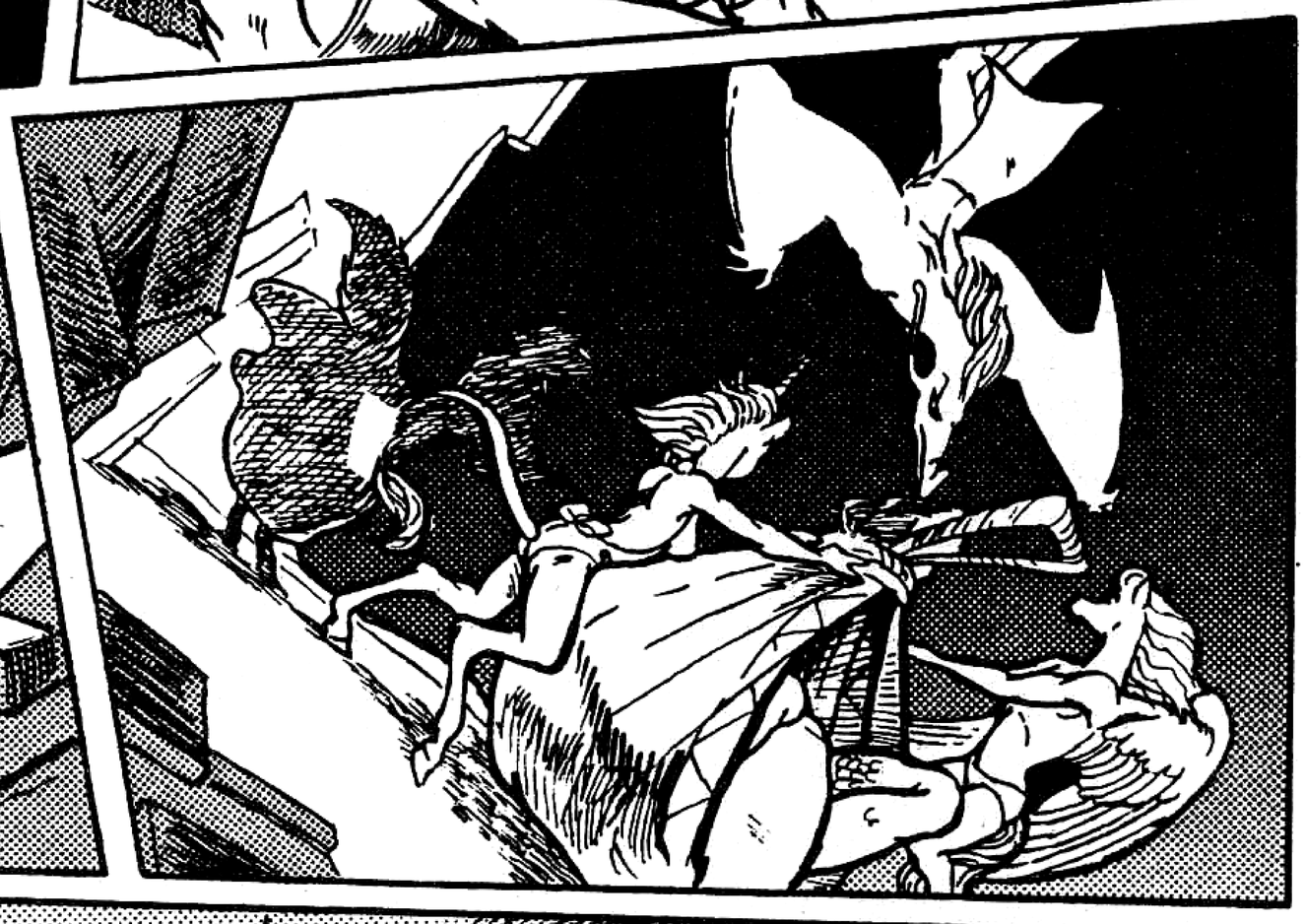
YES, BUT HE'S BADLY HURT. WE'LL HAVE TO GET HIM TO MY UNICORN POOL IF HE'S TO SURVIVE.
WHAT HAPPENED?!
I DON'T KNOW...

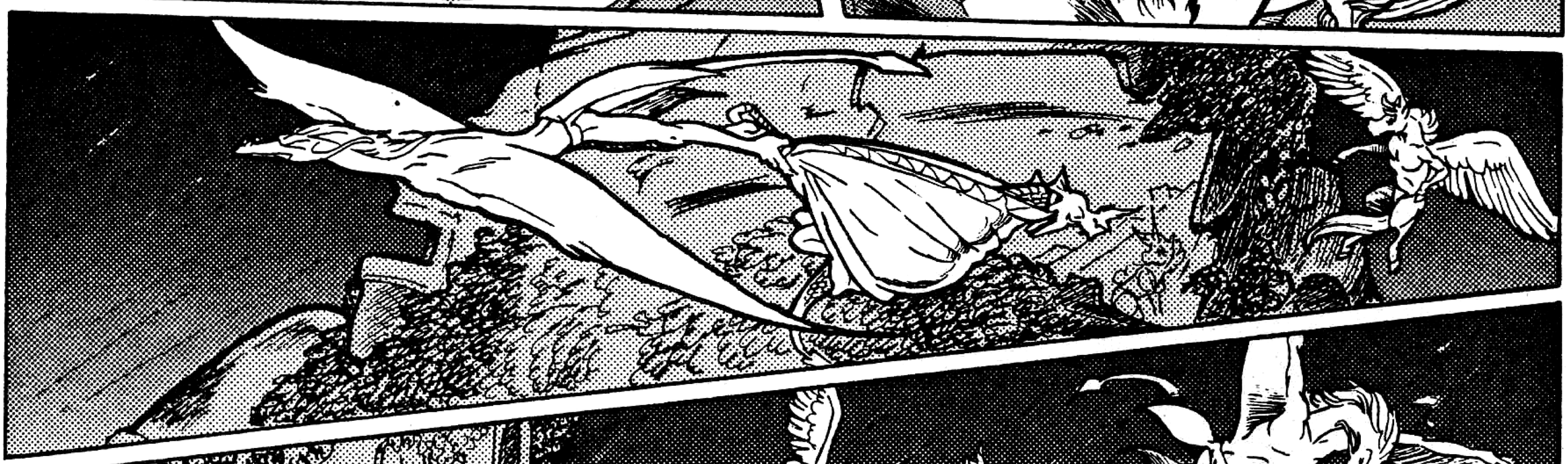
I SAW NO SIGN OF HIS ATTACKERS EMPRESS. EITHER ON THE GROUND OR IN THE AIR.
YOU SAW NO ONE?!

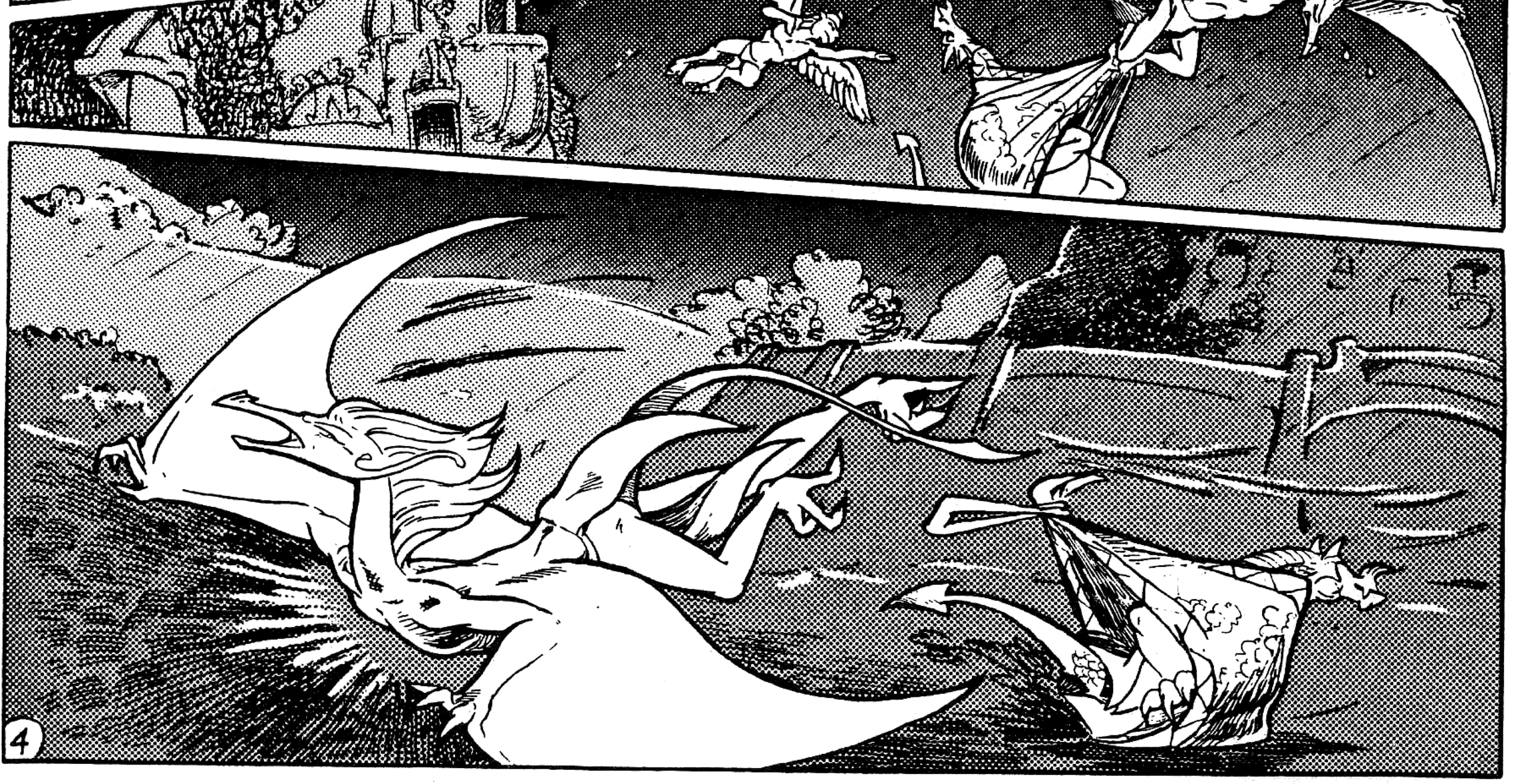
NO. THE STORM IS THICK NOW AND VISIBILITY IS POOR. I CAN TELL YOU ONLY THAT THE ATTACK ON LORD OCTAVIUS WAS PREPETRATED BY MAGIC.
HOW DO YOU KNOW?
MAGIC LEAVES TRACES, AND THE TRAINED EYE CAN SEE THEM. WHOEVER DID THIS IS VERY POWERFUL.

HE'S FREE, MAJESTY. AS SOON AS THEY HAVE THE DOORWAY CLEAR, WE'LL CARRY HIM DOWN TO THE POOL.


NEVER MIND THAT! RIG A SLING! I'LL FLY HIM DOWN!
YES! USE THE TAPESTRIES IN THE HALL!



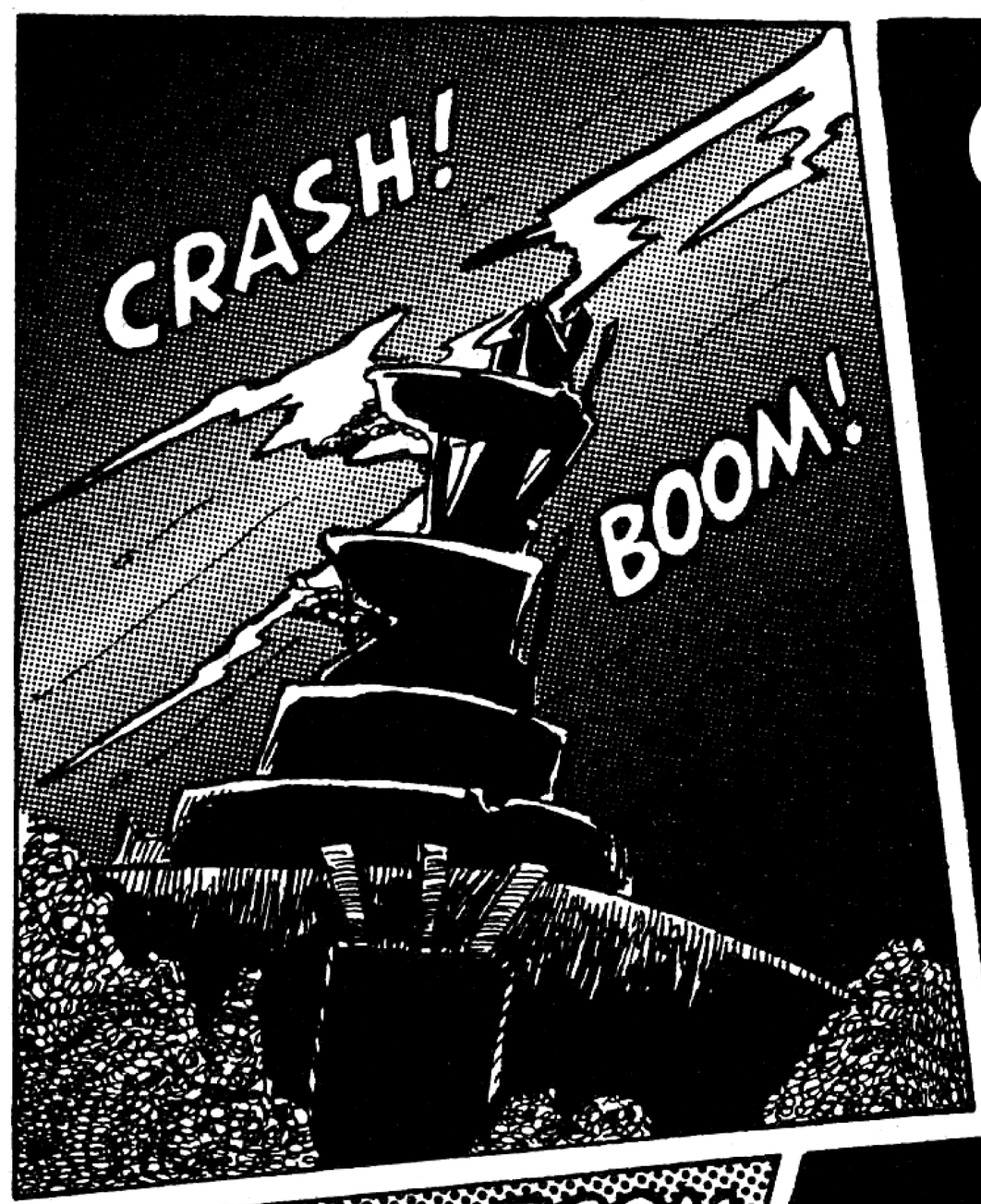


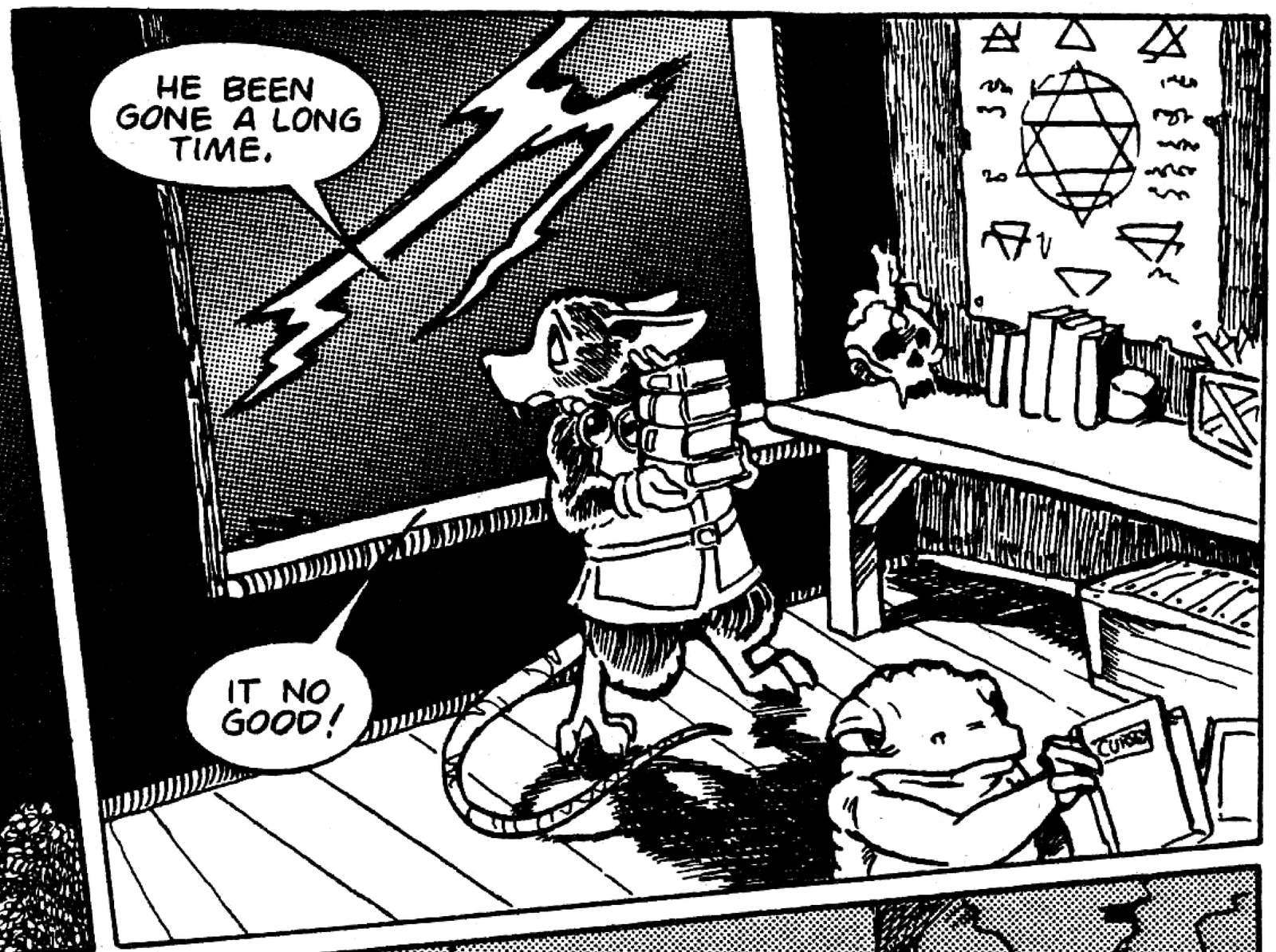


HURRY! BRING HIM!
I PRAY THE MAGIC IN YOUR POOL IS STRONG, EMPRESS. WATER FROM A UNICORN POOL DOESN'T WORK THAT WELL ON DRAGONS.
IT WILL WORK! IT HAS TO WORK! PLEASE LIVE, OCTAVIUS! ...DON'T LEAVE ME.
UGH!
OCTAVIUS!
WHO DID THIS TO YOU?! TELL ME!
PLUME... YOU BASTARD...
REGINALD PLUME?! HE'S NOT A SORCERER!

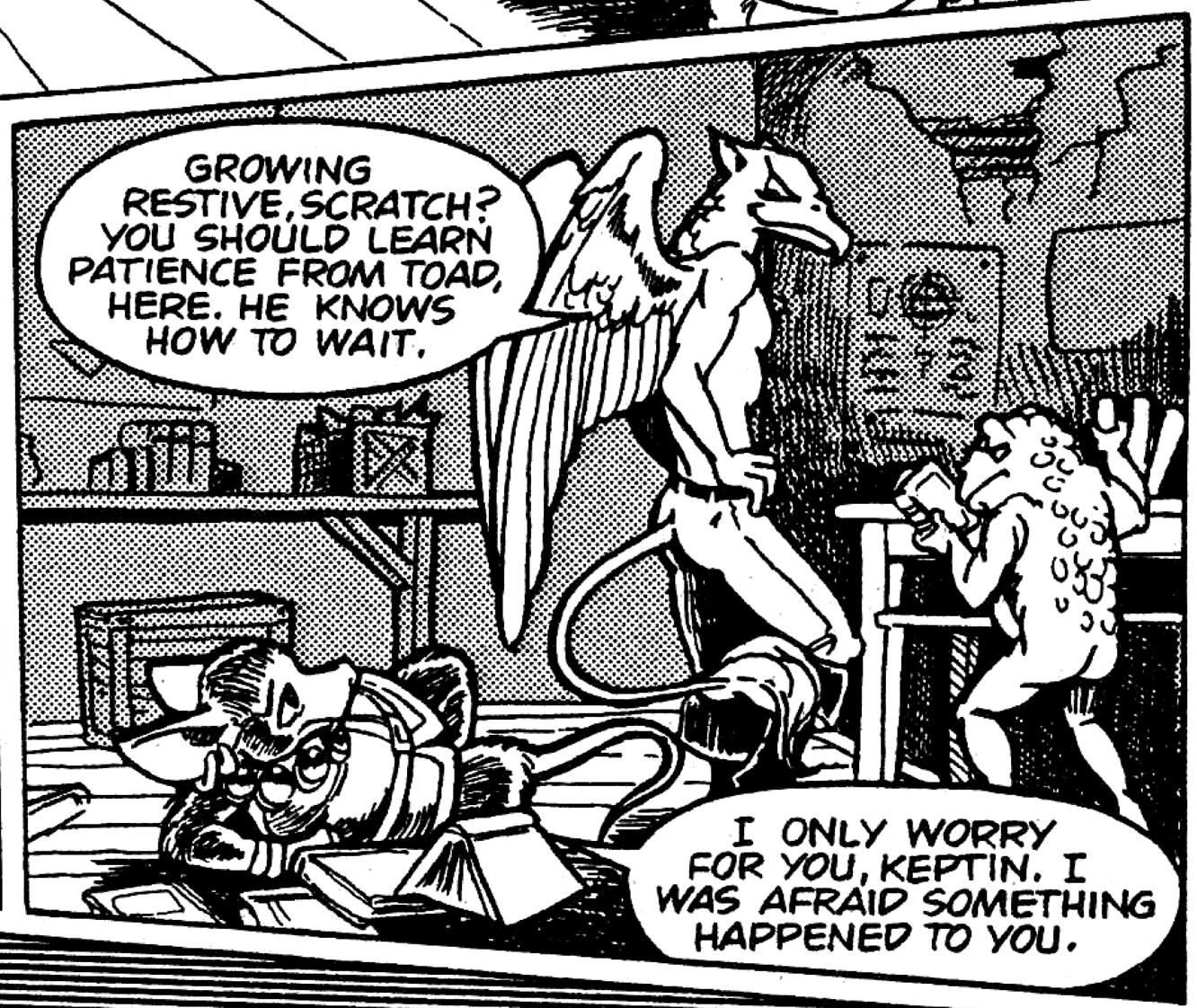
YOU OKAY, KINO?
PANT. PUFF.
ANYTHING BROKEN?
NO. I LANDED IN THE SWAMP. THE WATER CUSHIONED MY FALL. BUT I ALMOST DROWNED. WE GOLDEN DRAGONS AREN'T VERY GOOD SWIMMERS.
HOW DID YOU FIND ME?
WE SAW THE FLASH OF YOUR FIRE WHEN YOU BREATHED. THEN WE SAW SOMETHING SMASH YOU OUT OF THE AIR! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
WHAT HIT YOU?
I THOUGHT IT WAS PLUME... BUT IT WASN'T.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

IT LOOKED LIKE PLUME, BUT IT WASN'T HIM! HE USED MAGIC TO RESIST MY FIRE, THEN HE STRUCK ME FROM THE SKY LIKE HE WAS SWATTING A FLY! PLUME WAS NEVER SO POWERFUL!
WHERE DID YOU SEE THIS "REGINALD LOOK-ALIKE"?
AT THE OLD WATCHTOWER. HE TOOK FLIGHT FROM THERE. HE HAS A GUARD OF WALLOWS' VERMIN STATIONED AROUND IT. WE MUST WARN THE EMPRESS, TABBE-SAN! HE WAS HEADING FOR THE PALACE.
SO WE WILL, MON AMI! CAN YOU TRAVEL?
I'M A LITTLE TIRED BUT I CAN MANAGE.
C'EST BIENNE. JONATHON, GET OUR DREYS.
RIGHT.
IT WILL BE FASTER IF I FLY.
IN THIS STORM? I THINK NOT. BESIDES, YOU SHOULD REST THOSE WINGS. WE MAY HAVE NEED OF THEM LATER.
7

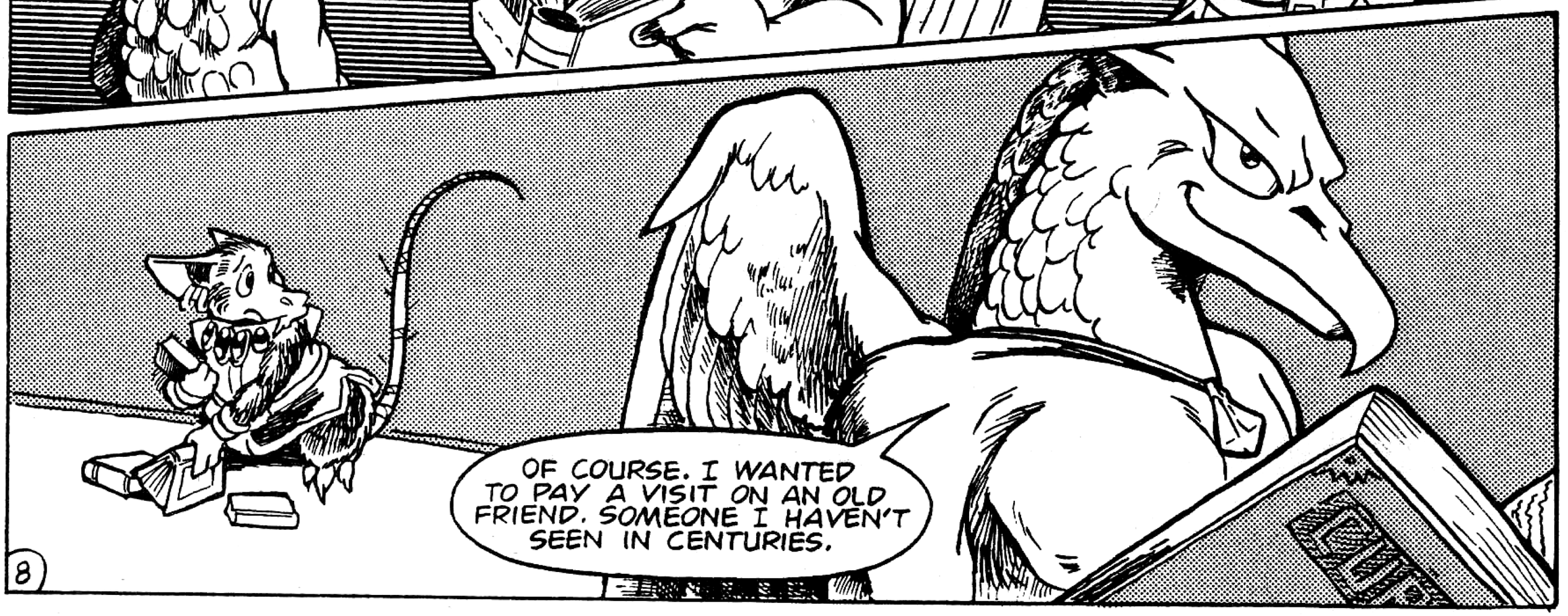

CRASH!
BOOM!


HE BEEN GONE A LONG TIME.
IT NO GOOD!

BOOM


GROWING RESTIVE, SCRATCH? YOU SHOULD LEARN PATIENCE FROM TOAD, HERE. HE KNOWS HOW TO WAIT.
I ONLY WORRY FOR YOU, KEPTIN. I WAS AFRAID SOMETHING HAPPENED TO YOU.

HOW TOUCHING.
BRANDY, TOAD. MAKE IT HOT.
YOU GO TO PALACE?


OF COURSE. I WANTED TO PAY A VISIT ON AN OLD FRIEND. SOMEONE I HAVEN'T SEEN IN CENTURIES.

MEBBE THAT NO GOOD, KEPTIN. MEBBE THEY SEE YOU. FOLLOW YOU BACK HERE!
NO ONE AT THE PALACE HAS ANY REAL IDEA WHAT HAPPENED TONIGHT...
...AND THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN TELL THEM IS EITHER VERY UNCONSCIOUS, OR VERY DEAD...
LET'S SEE WHICH IT IS.
TOAD! MY CRYSTAL!
SO YOU'RE STILL ALIVE OCTAVIUS!
JUST BARELY ALIVE, FROM THE LOOK OF YOU.
WAKE UP, NOW. TELL THEM WHO DID THIS TO YOU.
NO, KEPTIN! IF HE TELL THEM, THE EMPRESS COME HERE WITH HER ARMIES! SHE MASH THIS PLACE FLAT!
THE EMPRESS IS A CHILD! SHE'S TOO YOUNG TO REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED HERE, OR WHY THIS WATCHTOWER WAS BUILT. IT FELL INTO DISUSE BEFORE SHE WAS BORN. IF SHE COMES WITH HER ARMY, I'LL RAISE ONE OF MY OWN...
AND THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN HELP HER AGAINST THAT ARMY, LIES BLEEDING IN A UNICORN POOL...

TYPHON!...
WHO?
OCTAVIUS! THANK GODS!
ALICIA! WHAT...?
WHERE AM I?
YES... I REMEMBER...
I WAS ATTACKED...
IN MY UNICORN POOL, DEAR OLD FRIEND! YOU WERE HURT. WE THOUGHT YOU WERE DYING! WE BROUGHT YOU HERE. NOW YOU'LL BE ALL RIGHT!
YOU SAID REGINALD PLUME DID IT. HOW DID HE DO THIS TO YOU?
AND WHO...
...IS TYPHON?

TYPHON WAS A SORCERER WHO LIVED ON THE NORTHERN COAST THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO. HE THREATENED THE RULE OF ALLYNRUD WHEN THE EMPEROR WAS JUST A COLT. MY MASTER SAARIUS AND I THOUGHT WE HAD DESTROYED HIM, BUT HE HAS SURVIVED. HE HAS TAKEN POSSESSION OF THE BODY OF REGINALD PLUME. TONIGHT HE USED THAT BODY TO ATTACK ME.

THE SORCERER TYPHON HAS MERGED WITH REGINALD PLUME?

THEN HE KNOWS WHAT PLUME KNEW! HE KNOWS THIS PALACE AND IT'S WEAKNESSES!

HE KNEW THE WAY TO MY BEDCHAMBER WELL ENOUGH...

IT SEEMS YOU HAVE A NEW ENEMY, EMPRESS. ONE WITH THE MAGIC OF A SORCERER AND ALL THE INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF THE CAPTAIN OF YOUR GUARD! HE MUST BE FOUND! AND DESTROYED!

I AGREE, PRINCESS KAJIKO. I WILL SEND OUT AN ADVANCE GUARD TO LOOK FOR HIM AND WHEN THEY FIND THIS GRIFFEN, I WILL LEAD MY ARMY AGAINST HIM.

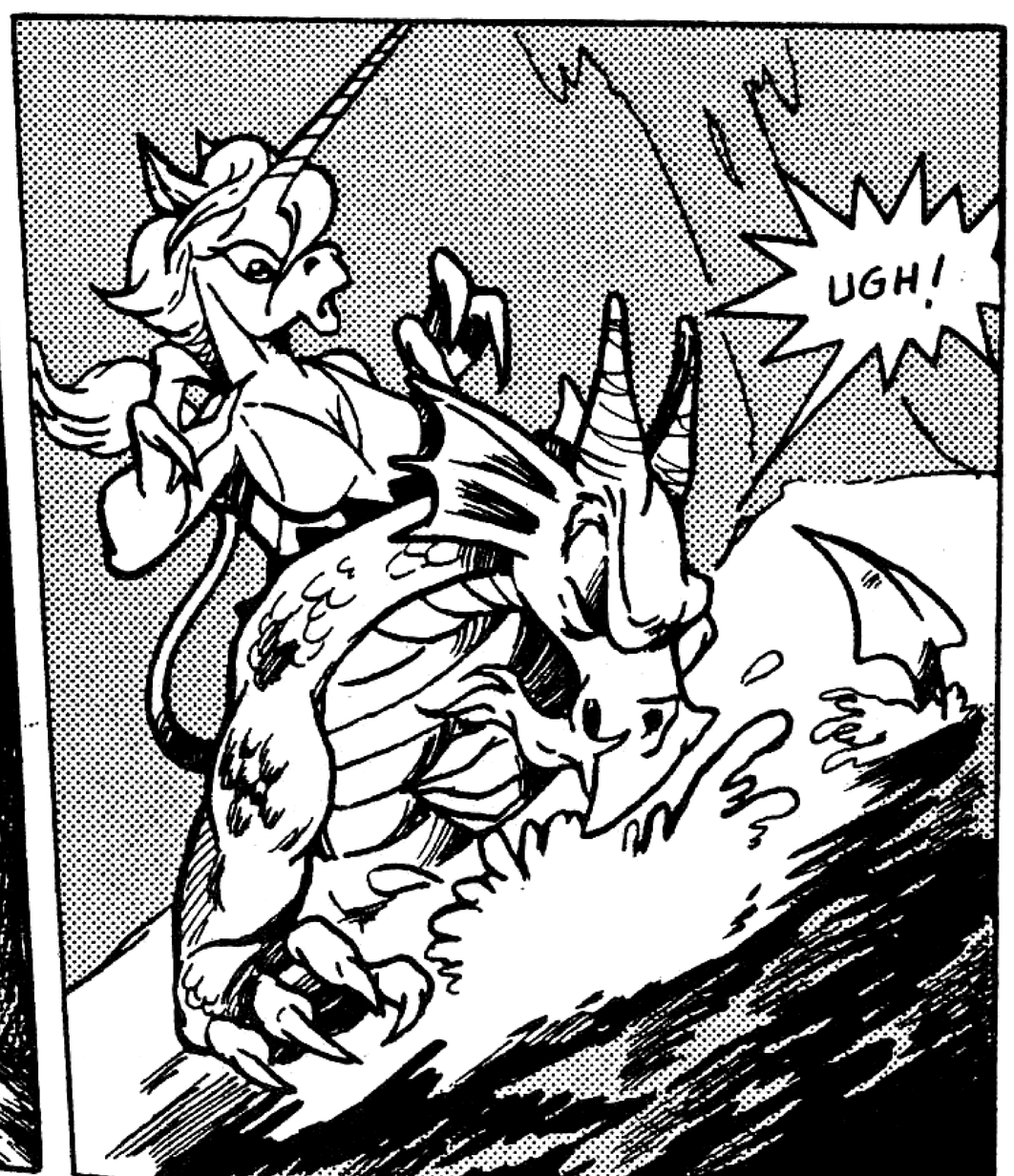
YOU?! NEVER!! NEVER, ALICIA! DO YOU HEAR ME?! I WILL NOT PERMIT IT!

MY FATHER LED THE ARMIES OF XANADU...

YOUR FATHER WAS A STALLION FULLY GROWN! YOU'RE SCARCELY MORE THAN A FOAL!

I AM EMPRESS OF XANADU AND THE DAUGHTER OF ALLYNRUD! THIS GRIFFEN ATTACKED MY PALACE AND NEARLY KILLED ONE OF MY CLOSEST FRIENDS! HOW WOULD IT LOOK IF I DID NOTHING!?! HOW WILL IT LOOK TO THE GOLDEN REALM?

THEN I WILL GO WITH YOU!


UGH!

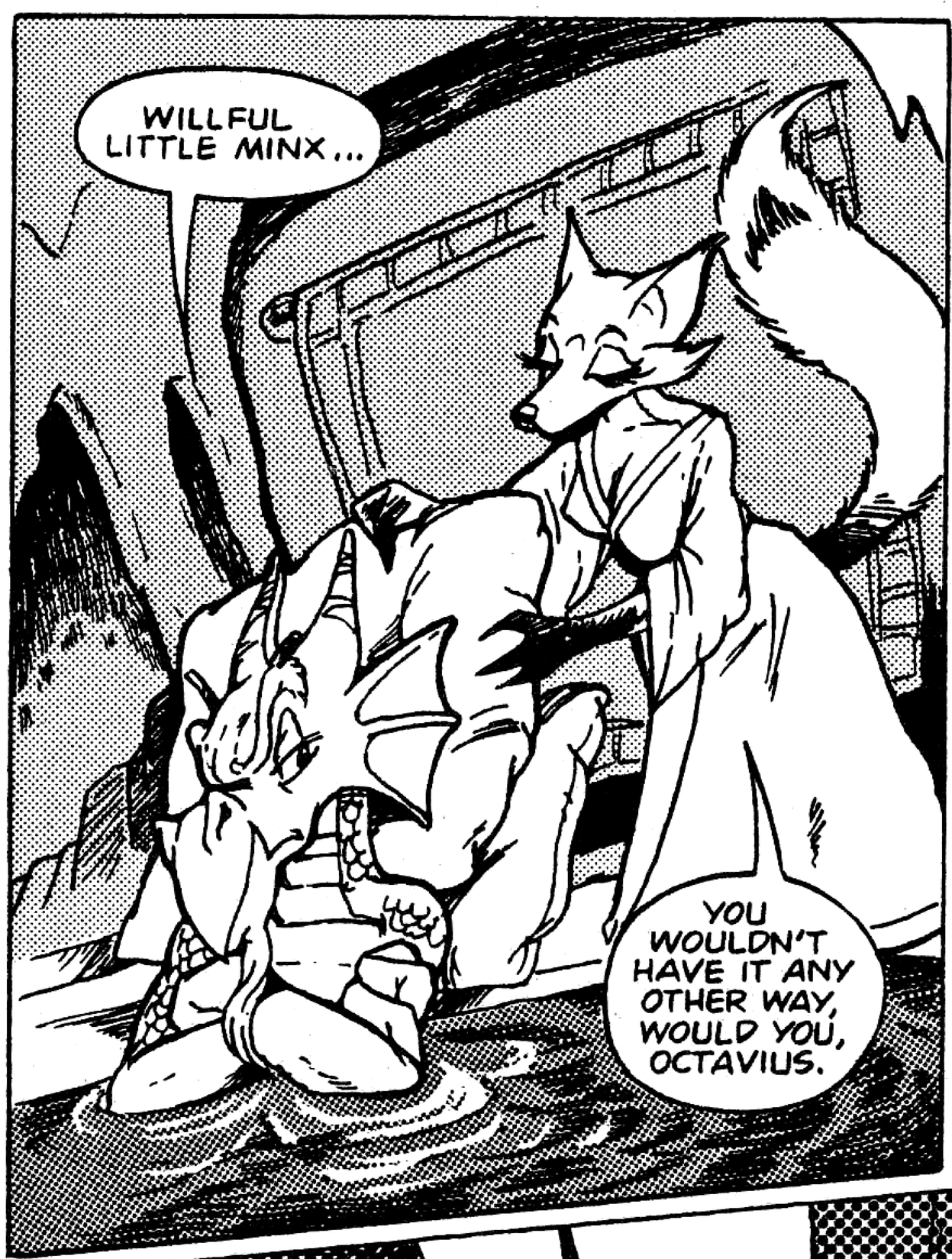
REST, OCTAVIUS. YOU'RE TOO BADLY HURT TO COME WITH ME.

I WON'T RISK LOSING YOU... NOT AGAIN...
STUBBORN LITTLE GIRL...

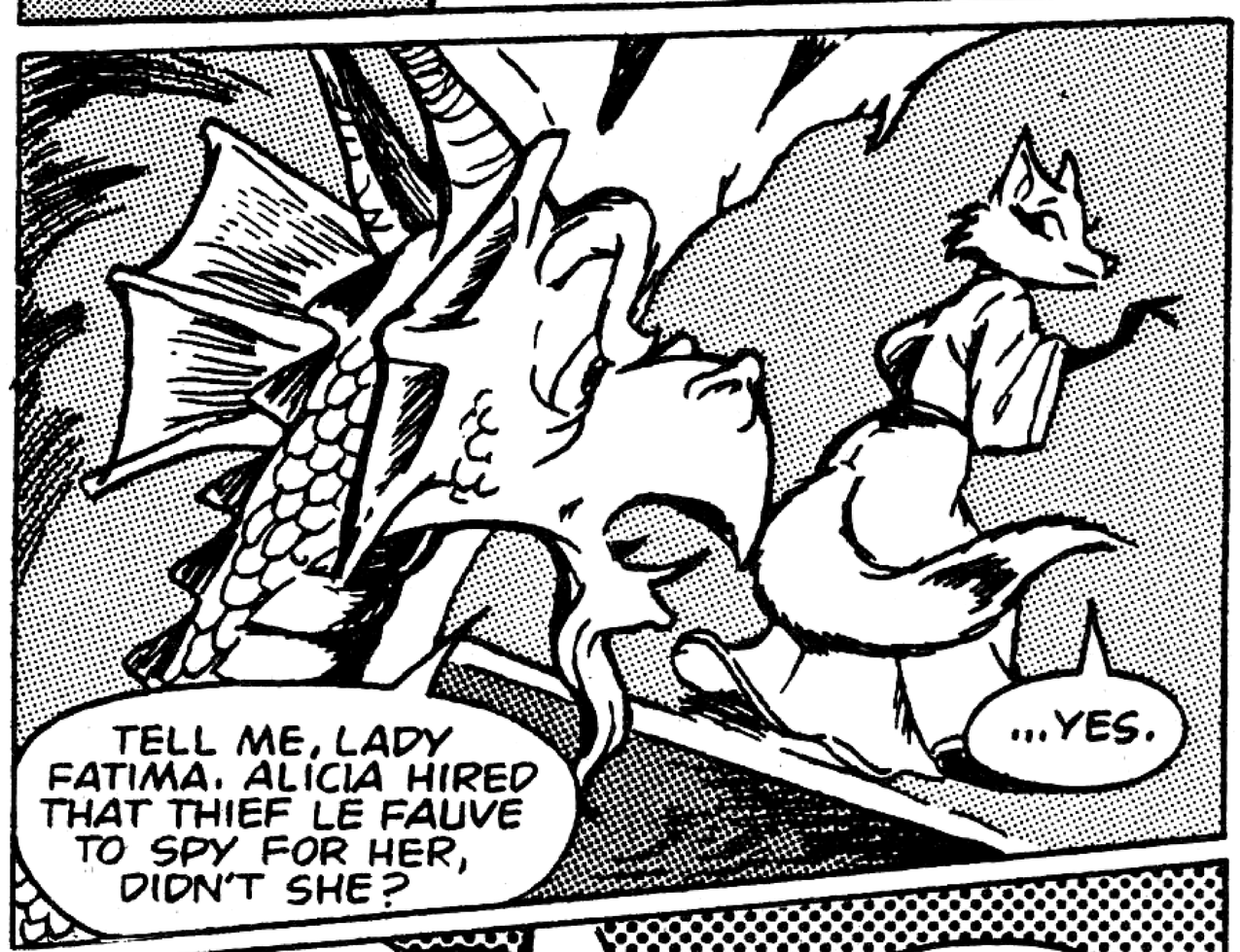
DO NOT WORRY, OCTAVIUS-SAN. I WILL BE WITH HER. AND I AM A SORCERESS OF SOME SKILL.

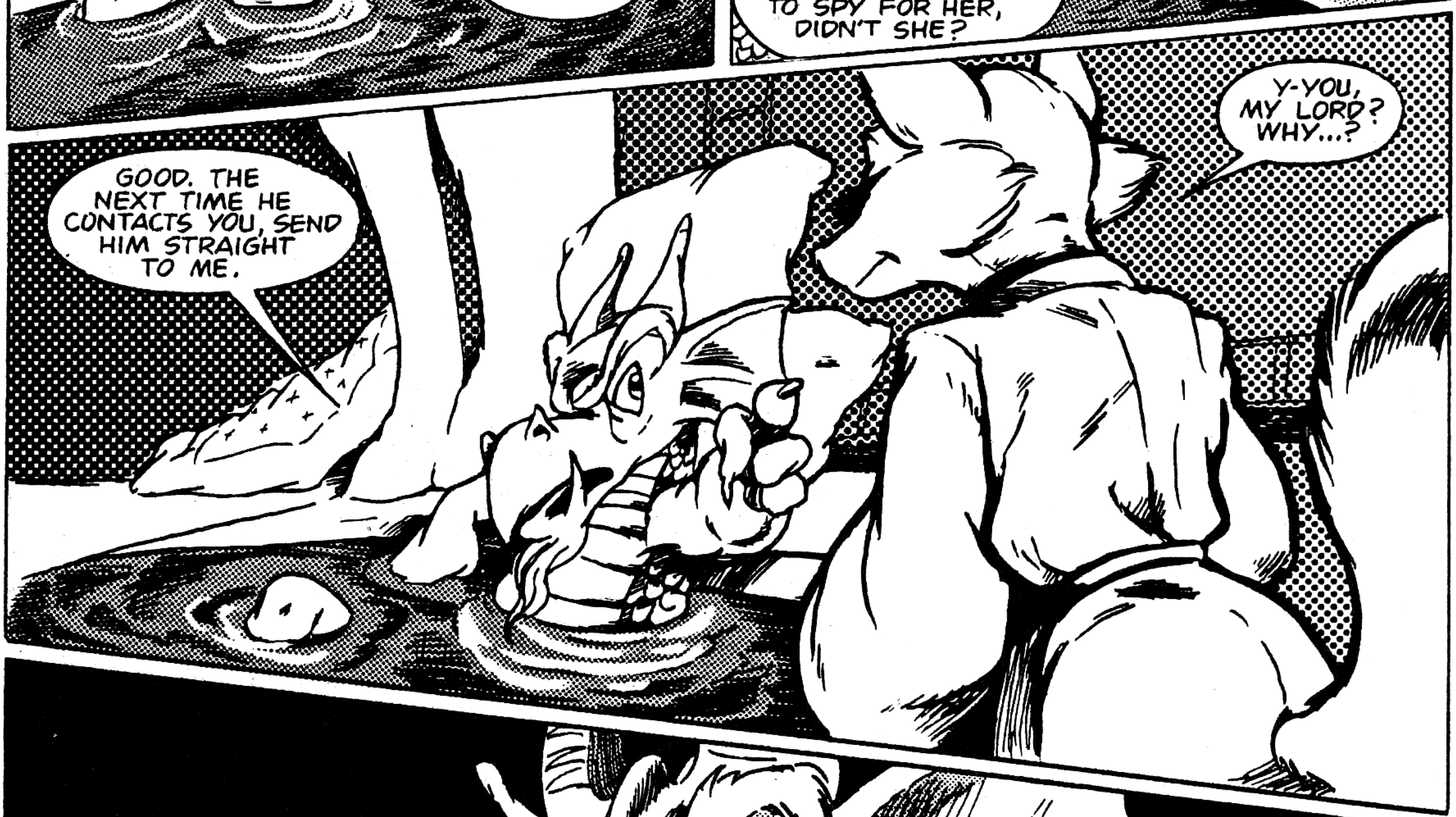
BUT YOU CAN'T CAST SPELLS IN FLIGHT!
IF IT IS NECESSARY, SIMPLE SPELLS CAN BE MANAGED. AND EVEN IF I MUST LAND, I WILL HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF SURPRISE. REGINALD PLUME DOESN'T KNOW I'M A SORCERESS. NEITHER WILL TYPHON...

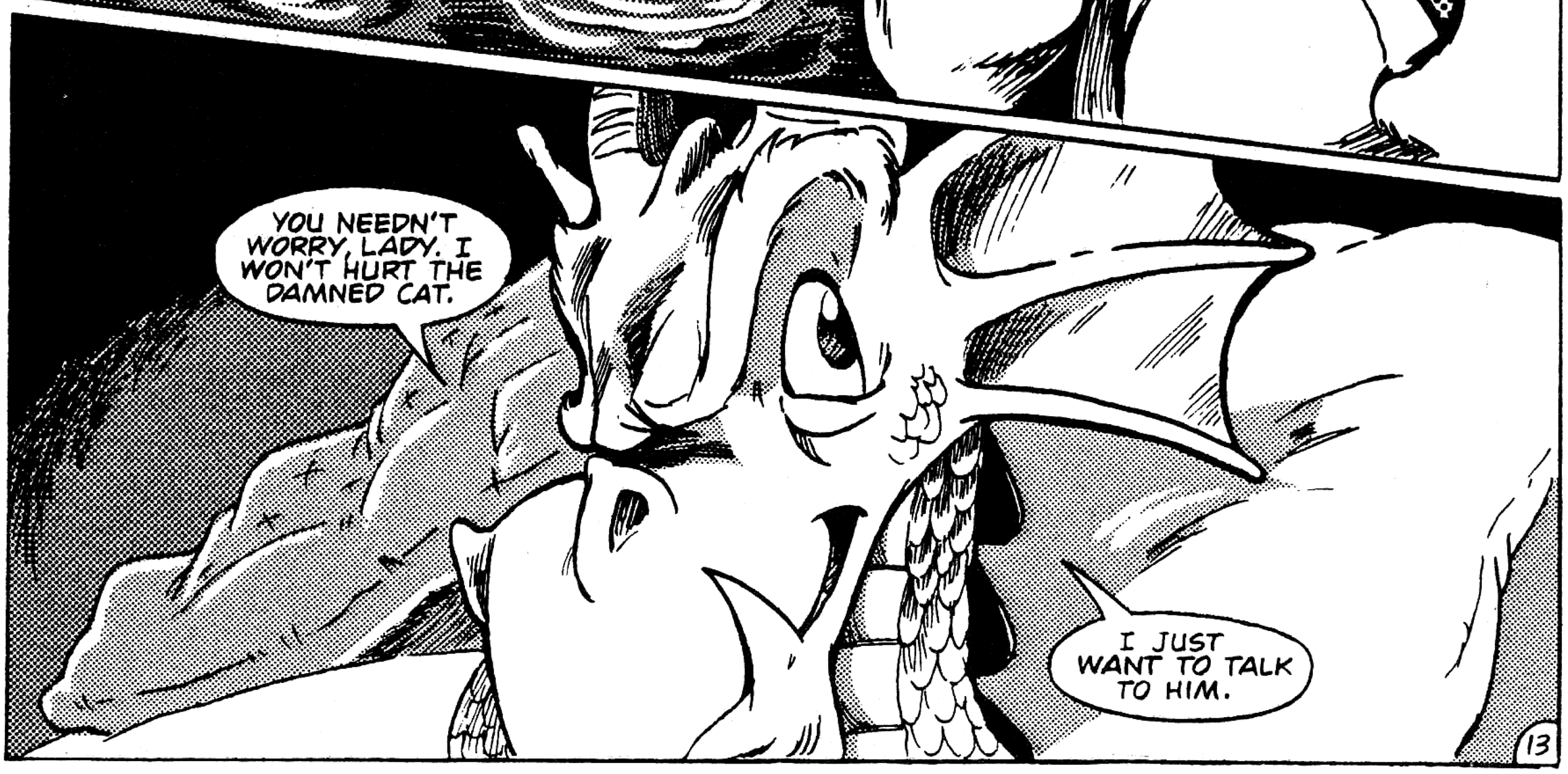
IT'S SETTLED, OCTAVIUS. KAJIKO WILL COME WITH ME. YOU REST UNTIL YOU'RE STRONGER. FATA, PLEASE STAY WITH OCTAVIUS. LET ME KNOW IF HE NEEDS ANYTHING.
OF COURSE.


WILLFUL LITTLE MINX...
YOU WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY, WOULD YOU, OCTAVIUS.

I SUPPOSE NOT...


TELL ME, LADY FATIMA. ALICIA HIRED THAT THIEF LE FAUVE TO SPY FOR HER, DIDN'T SHE?
...YES.

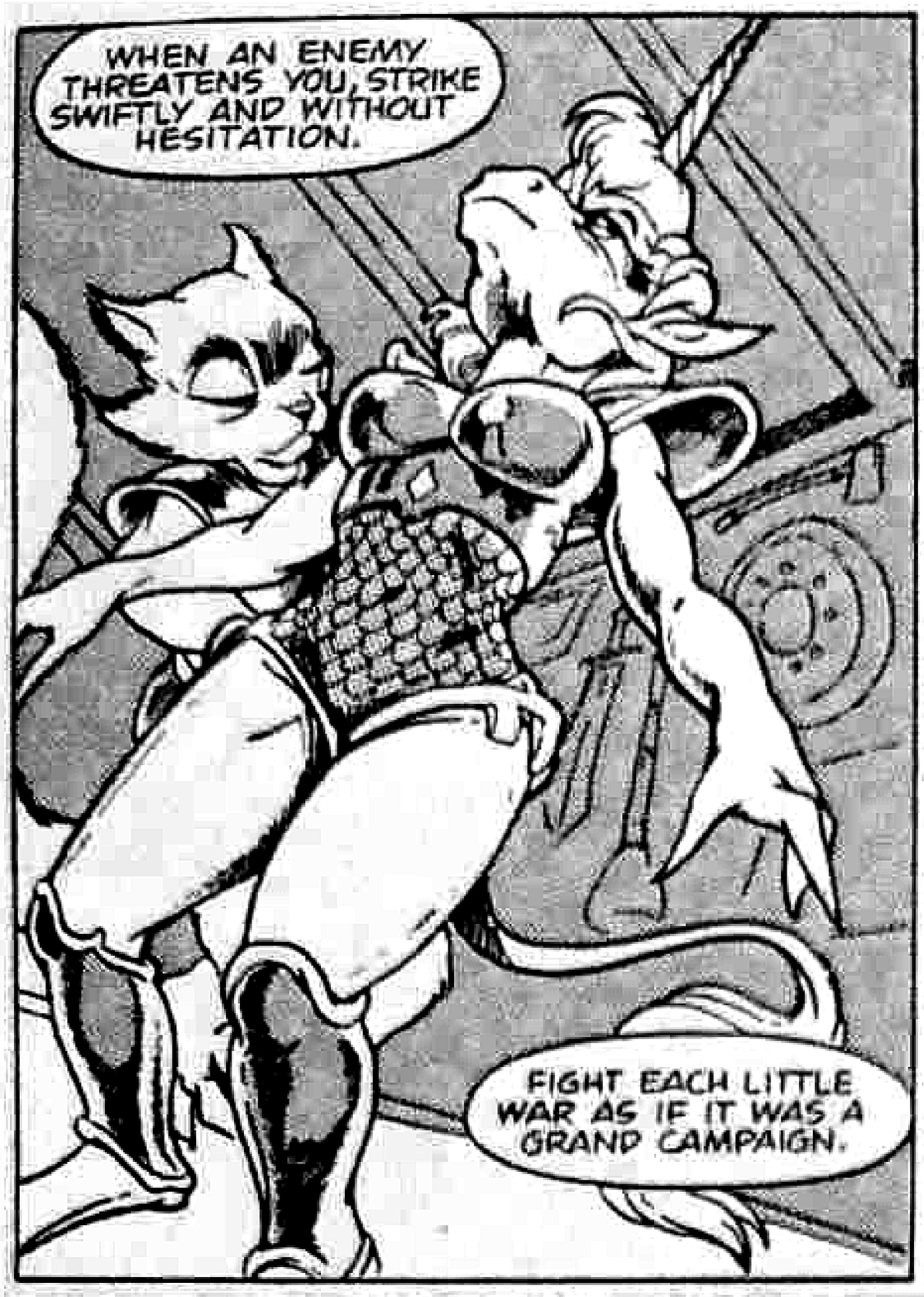

GOOD. THE NEXT TIME HE CONTACTS YOU, SEND HIM STRAIGHT TO ME.
Y-YOU, MY LORD? WHY...?


YOU NEEDN'T WORRY, LADY. I WON'T HURT THE DAMNED CAT.
I JUST WANT TO TALK TO HIM.

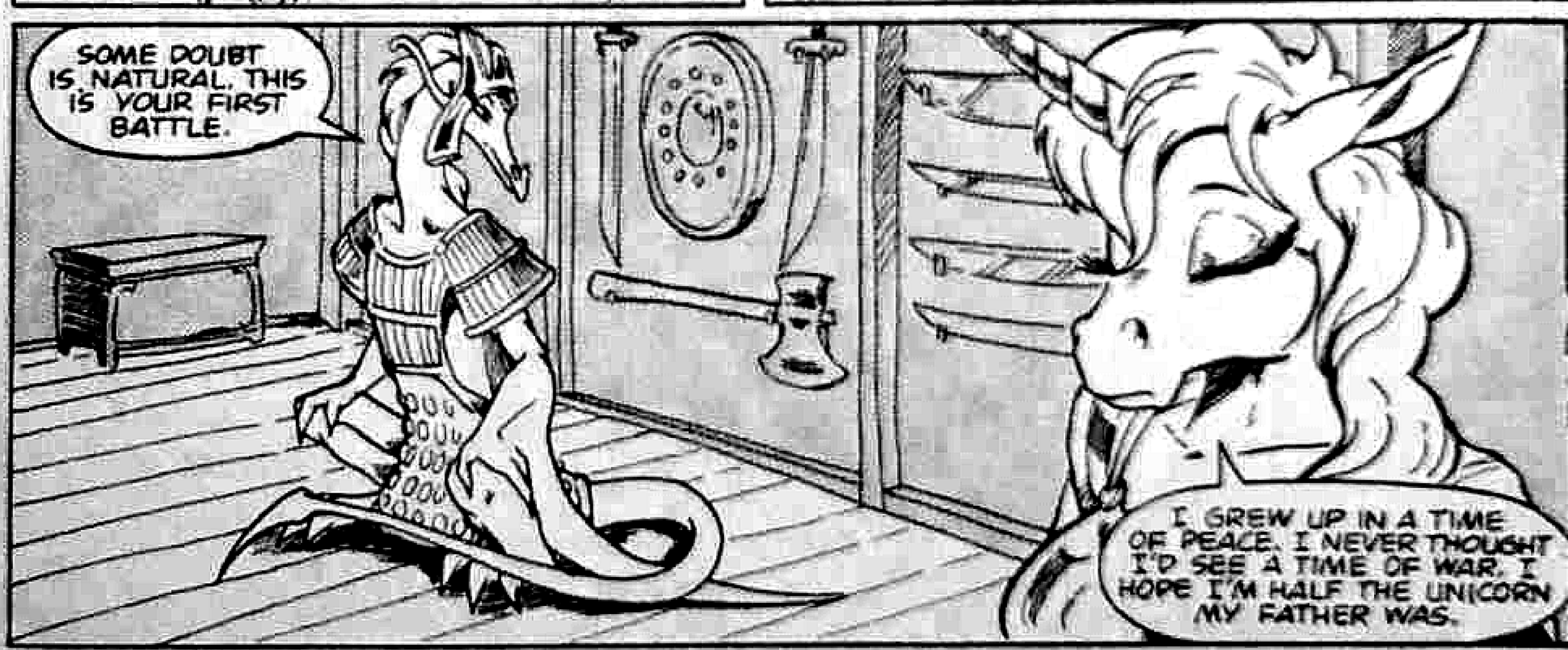
THERE'S A LOT OF TRAFFIC ON THE ROAD TONIGHT. THAT'S THE THIRD PATROL WE'VE SEEN.
WHY DID WE HIDE, TABBE-SAN? ARE WE NOT THE EMPRESS' MEN?
OF COURSE. BUT I DOUBT THE EMPRESS HAS TOLD HER GUARDS THAT. THE BEST SPY IS A SECRET ONE.
BESIDES, OLD HABITS DIE HARD...
GODS...
TAB, C'MERE! LOOK AT THIS!
NO WONDER THERE ARE SO MANY PATROLS OUT TONIGHT! PLUME MUST'VE HAD SOME KINDA BOMB!
...FATIMA...
TAB! WAIT!

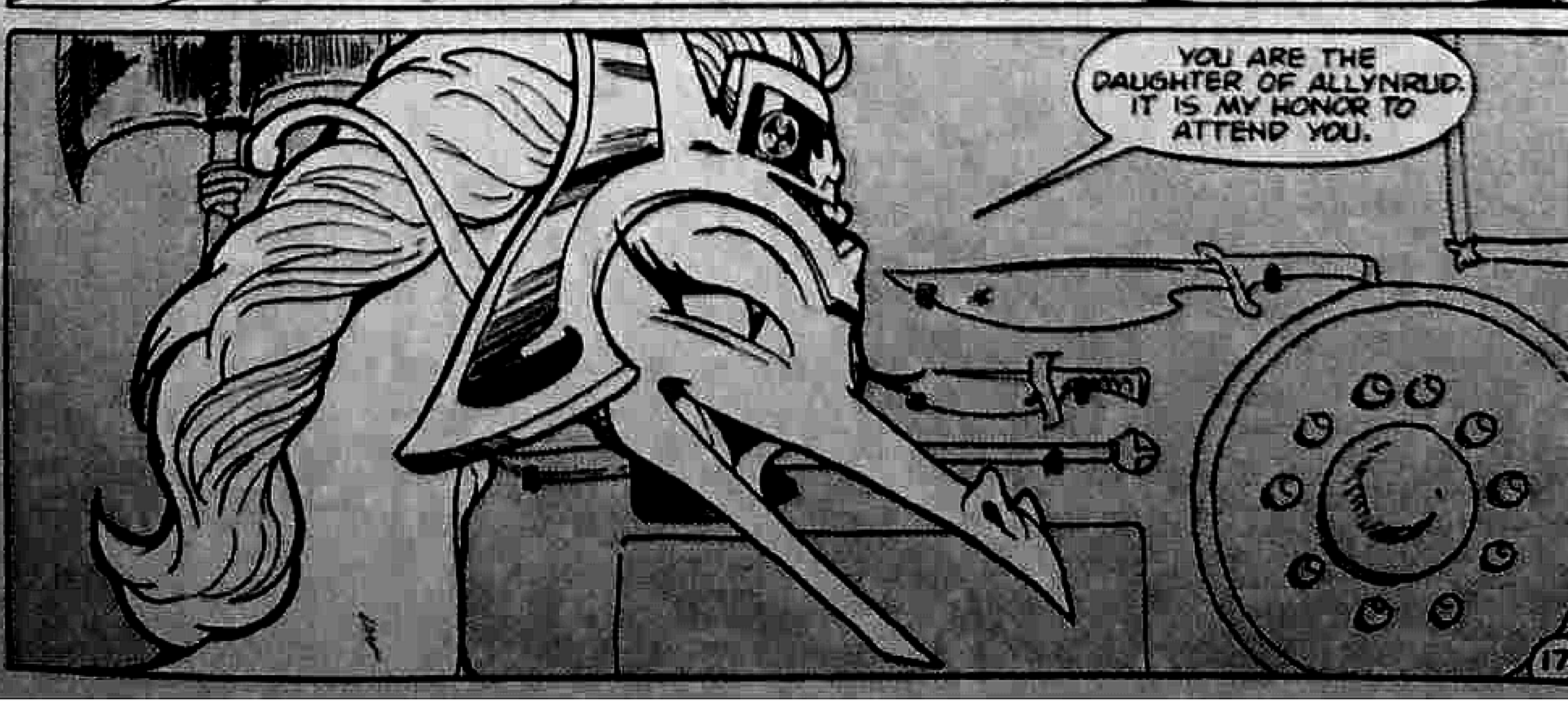
THIS IS ALL WE WERE ABLE TO SALVAGE, LADY.
I HOPE IT'S ENOUGH. HE'S DONE NOTHING BUT COMPLAIN SINCE ALICIA LEFT HIM IN MY CARE!
SPLOOSH
HE'S WORRIED ABOUT THE EMPRESS, LADY.
YES... SO AM I...
FATIMA!
GIVE ME STRENGTH!
WHAT DO YOU WANT NOW, OCTAVIUS?
I REQUIRE THREE WHITE WAX CANDLES AND TWO OUNCES OF SEA SALT. SEND SOMEONE TO THE PANTRY TO FETCH THEM.
I'LL GO MYSELF, LORD OCTAVIUS.
I CAN USE THE REST...
15

... FATIMA ...
TABBE! YOU SCARED ME!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? I SAW THE HOLE IN THE PALACE. I WAS AFRAID YOU'D BEEN HURT...
I'M FINE, LOVE. LORD OCTAVIUS WAS THE ONE HURT. HE WAS ATTACKED BY A SORCERER NAMED TYPHON.
TYPHON? KINOMON SAID IT LOOKED LIKE REGINALD PLUME.
IT WAS PLUME- AND IT WASN'T. REGINALD HAS MERGED HIMSELF WITH THIS SORCERER.
THEY ARE NOW THE SAME PERSON.
THAT ACCOUNTS FOR THE MAGIC! KINOMON SAW REGINALD HEADING FOR THE PALACE AND ATTEMPTED TO INTERCEPT HIM. PLUME NOT ONLY RESISTED HIS FIRE, BUT SWATTED HIM OUT OF THE SKY!
IS KINOMON ALL RIGHT?
BATTERED, BUT UNBOWED, MA CHERIE.
HE'S ALSO BRIMMING WITH INFORMATION. IT SEEMS DEAR PLUME HAS TAKEN UP RESIDENCE IN THE OLD WATCHTOWER AT THE EDGE OF THE SWAMP. HE'S RECRUITED A SMALL ARMY OF WALLOWS SCUM TO GUARD IT FOR HIM.
I MUST TELL THE EMPRESS! YOU MUST TALK TO LORD OCTAVIUS. HE WANTS TO SPEAK WITH YOU.
ME? WHAT FOR?
HE DIDN'T SAY. HE SAID ONLY THAT HE WANTED TO TALK TO YOU. HE'S IN THE UNICORN POOL... DON'T WORRY, TABBE. IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT. I PROMISE.


WHEN AN ENEMY THREATENS YOU, STRIKE SWIFTLY AND WITHOUT HESITATION.
FIGHT EACH LITTLE WAR AS IF IT WAS A GRAND CAMPAIGN.

KLIK
WHEN THE ENEMY STRIKES FIRST, STRIKE HARDER. SHOW WEAKNESS AND THE EMPIRE WILL ROT FROM WITHIN.
SUCH IS THE ADVICE OF GOLDEN MOTHER AND THE LAW OF THE GOLDEN REALM.
THE GOLDEN MOTHER IS VERY WISE. I WISH I HAD HER WISDOM...

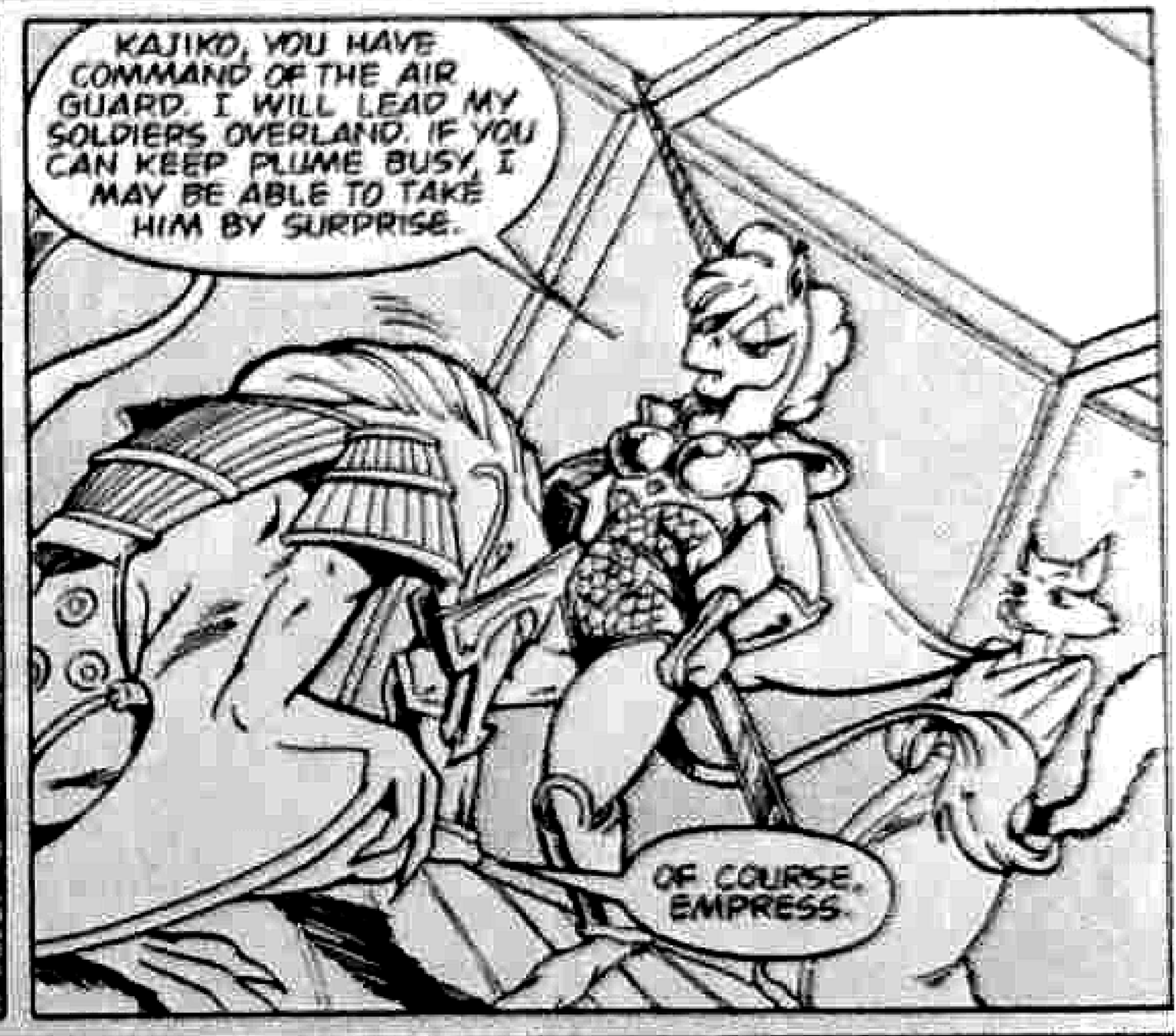

SOME DOUBT IS NATURAL. THIS IS YOUR FIRST BATTLE.
I GREW UP IN A TIME OF PEACE. I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE A TIME OF WAR. I HOPE I'M HALF THE UNICORN MY FATHER WAS.


YOU ARE THE DAUGHTER OF ALLYNRUD. IT IS MY HONOR TO ATTEND YOU.

ALICIA!

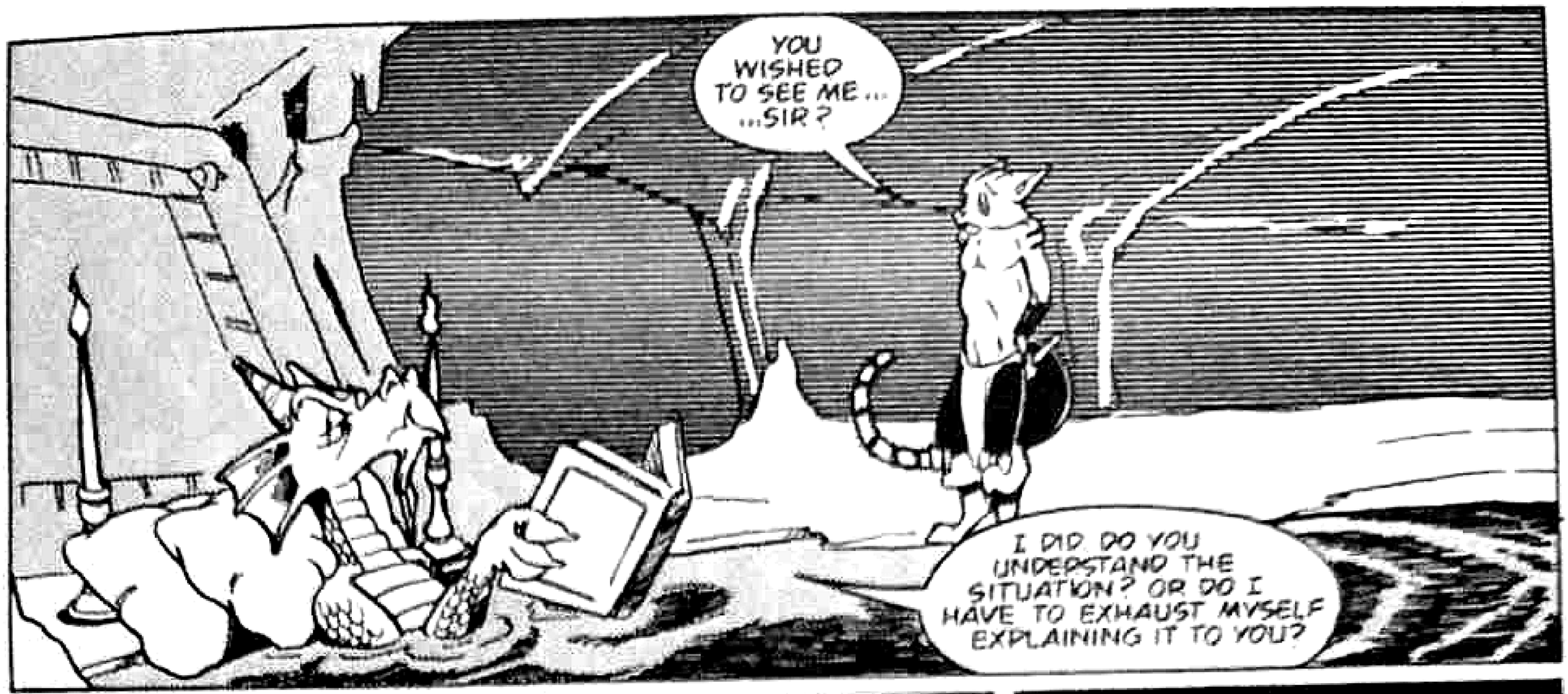
TABBE'S COME BACK WITH SOME INFORMATION. THEY'VE SEEN REGINALD PLUME AT THE OLD WATCHTOWER. HE'S TURNED IT INTO A FORTRESS.
THE TOWER IN THE SWAMP? THAT'S NO MORE THAN AN OLD RUIN.

TRUE, BUT THE GROUND AROUND IT IS MARSHY AND DIFFICULT TO APPROACH ON FOOT. WE CAN FLY IN, BUT HE'LL SEE US. THE TOWER IS A BETTER CHOICE THAN IT WOULD SEEM.
IF NEITHER OPTION IS PERFECT, WE'LL USE BOTH.


KAJIKO, YOU HAVE COMMAND OF THE AIR GUARD. I WILL LEAD MY SOLDIERS OVERLAND. IF YOU CAN KEEP PLUME BUSY, I MAY BE ABLE TO TAKE HIM BY SURPRISE.
OF COURSE, EMPRESS.

WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO, ALICIA?

TAKE CARE OF OCTAVIUS FOR ME. RIGHT NOW CARING FOR HIM AND KEEPING YOURSELF SAFE ARE THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT THINGS YOU CAN DO.
OF COURSE, ALICIA. GOOD LUCK.


YOU WISHED TO SEE ME... ...SIR?
I DID. DO YOU UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION? OR DO I HAVE TO EXHAUST MYSELF EXPLAINING IT TO YOU?

I KNOW THAT CAPTAIN PLUME HAS SOMEHOW MERGED HIMSELF WITH A SORCERER NAMED TYPHON. I KNOW THIS TYPHON IS VERY DANGEROUS.

GOOD. IS KINOMON WITH YOU?
UH, YES SIR. HE'S WAITING OUTSIDE. HE SAYS HE WON'T ENTER THE PALACE AGAIN UNTIL HE'S REVENGED THE DEATH OF FIREPETAL AND RESTORED HIS HONOR.

TELL HIM HE'LL BE ABLE TO DO BOTH IF HE WEARS THIS. IT IS MY GIFT TO HIM.

THIS IS A GENEROUS GIFT.
WHY...?
"WHY" IS NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS. JUST GIVE THE GEM TO KINOMON. TELL HIM IF HE WANTS TO REVENGE HIMSELF ON REGINALD PLUME, HE HAS TO WEAR IT.

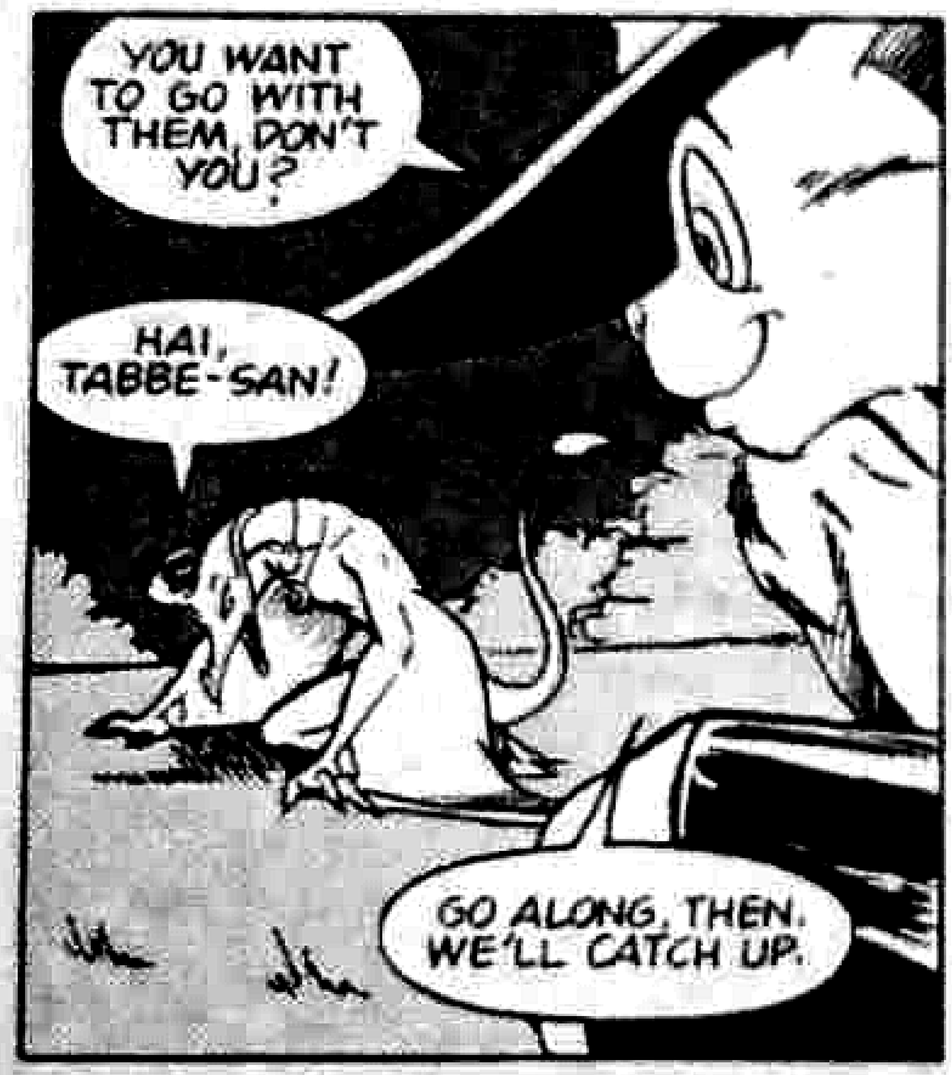
GO

DONE... GOOD...
YOU'RE YOUNG, KINOMON-SAN. AND YOU HAVE YOUR RAGE TO PROTECT YOU. TAKE CARE OF HER FOR ME...

LORD OCTAVIUS GAVE THIS TO ME...?
HE SAID IF YOU WANTED TO REVENGE YOURSELF ON REGINALD PLUME, YOU'D HAVE TO WEAR IT.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT GOOD THIS WILL DO, BUT FOR FIREPETAL'S SAKE, I WILL DO AS LORD OCTAVIUS ASKS.
LOOK!

MY SISTER!

AND EVERY ABLE-BODIED FLYER IN THE IMPERIAL GUARD! THEY'RE HEADING FOR THE SWAMP! THEY MUST BE GOING AFTER PLUME!


YOU WANT TO GO WITH THEM, DON'T YOU?
HAI, TABBE-SAN!
GO ALONG, THEN. WE'LL CATCH UP.

"CATCH UP", MR. LE FAUVE, SIR? HOW'RE WE GONNA DO THAT? THESE DREYS DON'T MOVE THAT FAST! AND EVEN IF WE DO "CATCH UP", WHAT'RE WE GONNA FIND? A WAR! IN CASE YOU AIN'T NOTICED WE'RE THIEVES! NOT SOLDIERS!

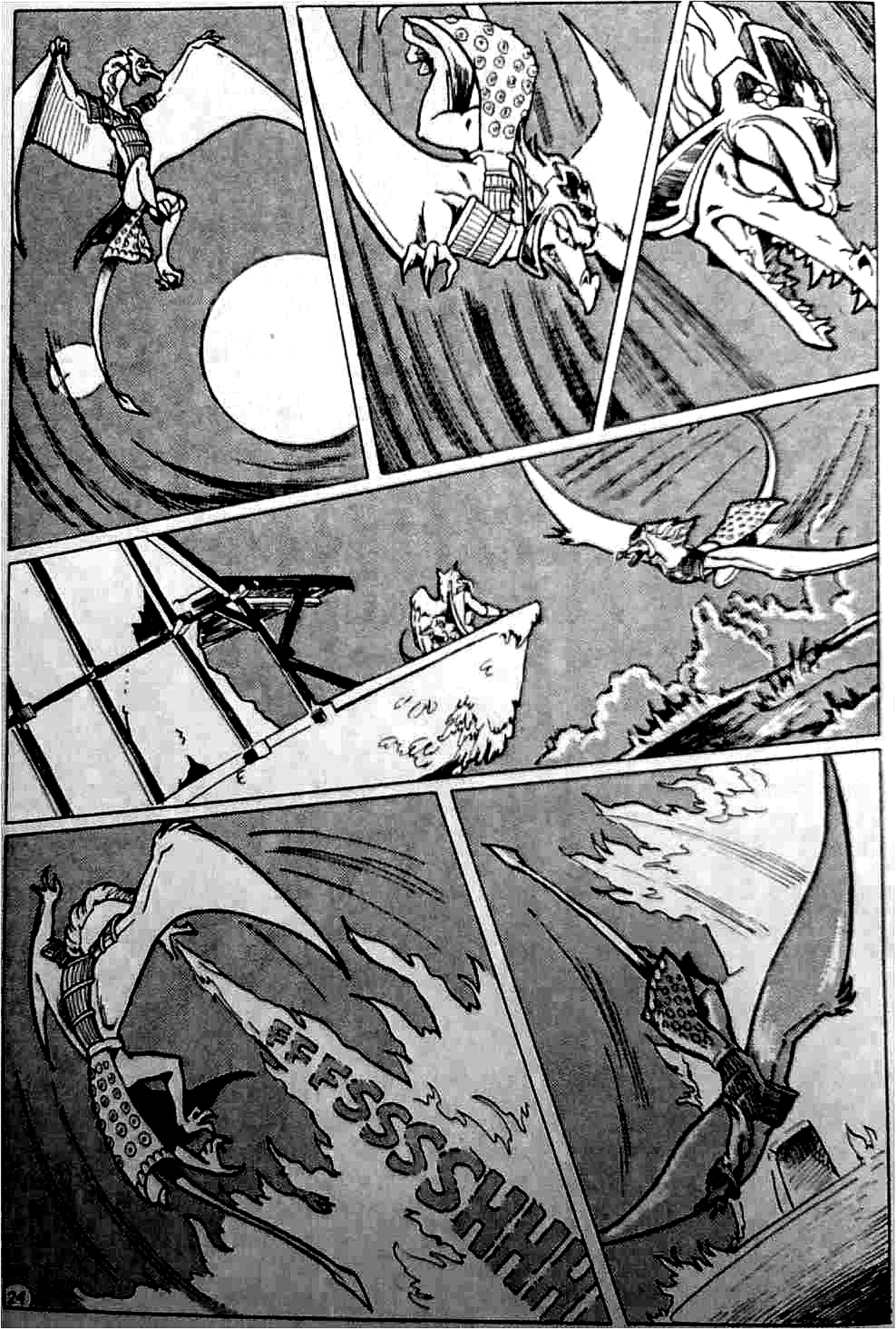
YOU PROTEST TOO MUCH, JONATHON-SAN. YOU WON'T LEAVE KINOMON TO FIGHT ALONE...

DAMN... AND I WAS SO HAPPY JUST BEING A MULE! WHY'D I EVER GET INVOLVED WITH YOU INNA FIRST PLACE?
I HAVE A CHARMING SMILE.

SNUNG
YOU ALSO HAVE A CUNNING DERRIER HERE. THIS OUGHT TO PROTECT IT.

I'M HAVING A PRIVATE LITTLE WAR.
CARE TO JOIN ME?
OF COURSE, MADEMOISELLE EMPRESS! I'D BE HONORED!
AND YOU, SIR?
I GUESS. I AIN'T GOT ANYTHING BETTER TO DO.
COME NOW, JONATHON. IT'S THE LITTLE RISKS THAT MAKE LIFE TASTY!
SEZ WHO...?

KEPTIN! HERE THEY COME!
SO SHE SENDS THE GOLDEN PRINCESS ON AHEAD WHILE SHE COMMANDS A SECOND BATTALION ON THE GROUND! THERE'S MORE OF ALLYNRUD IN OUR LITTLE EMPRESS THAN I THOUGHT.
WE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE, KEPTIN! IF THAT BIG DRAGON BREATH, SHE COOK US ALL!
HOLD YOUR GROUND, SCRATCH! IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE TO RUN!


FFSSSSHHHH

YOUR FIRE HAS NO EFFECT, PRINCESS/ AND WITHOUT YOUR FIRE, YOU'RE NO MORE OF A CHALLENGE THAN YOUR LITTLE BROTHER.
HA HA HA HA HA HA
AAH!
THE HATCHLING!
DAMNABLE LITTLE DRAGON! I'VE NO TIME TO PLAY WITH YOU!
DIE

GODS! HE'S STRONG!
I MUST ABSORB THE CHARGE OR HE'LL KILL THAT LITTLE DRAGON!
INTO THE STONE MAKE POWER FLOW AWAY FROM THE ONE WHO WEARS IT. SHELTERED FROM HARM THE BEARER KEEP. ASIDE TURN THE SPELL THAT SEARS HIM!
UHH!!
WHAM!
KINO-CHAN!
JOIN HIM IN DEATH, TRAITOR!

THE LADY PRACTICES MAGIC!
IT'S TOO BAD YOU DON'T HAVE THE USE OF YOUR HANDS PRINCESS! YOUR SPELLS SUFFER FOR IT!
I, ON THE OTHER CLAW, HAVE NO SUCH HANDICAP!
AAAH

NOT MUCH OF A CONTEST, IS IT?
IF YOU WANT LOYALTY FROM WALLOWS SCUM, YOU MUST BE PREPARED TO PAY FOR IT! DEAR PLUME JUST DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH GOLD FOR THAT!
THEN THE ONLY THING WE REALLY HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT IS THE GRIFFEN HIMSELF.
SURRENDER, TRAITOR! IN THE NAME OF ALLYNRUD!

WELL SAID, EMPRESS! WITH JUST THE RIGHT DRAMATIC FLAIR!
KLAP KLAP
DON'T MOCK ME, SIR! YOUR ARMY IS IN RETREAT! THIS VICTORY AND THAT WATCHTOWER ARE BOTH MINE!
I DON'T DISPUTE YOUR CLAIM TO THIS WATCHTOWER, LADY. YOUR FATHER BUILT IT. I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU KNOW WHY...
IT WAS ONCE A GUARDPOST ON THE BORDER OF HIS EMPIRE!
TRUE.
THIS LAND WAS ONCE A LUSH AND GROWING PLAIN. IT WAS A WAR OF MAGIC WHICH TURNED IT INTO THE SWAMP YOU SEE TODAY.
I FOUGHT HERE THREE CENTURIES AGO. I KILLED THOUSANDS BEFORE OCTAVIUS DESTROYED ME. THREE CENTURIES THIS TOWER HAS WAITED HERE... SO HAS THE ARMY I CALL FORTH NOW!
SQUELCH
GLOOP
SLUPP
VICTIMS OF MY MAGIC, I CALL THEE FORTH! ANSWER HIM WHO SLEW THEE! RISE!!
TAB, HOW DO WE KILL SOMETHING THAT'S ALREADY DEAD...?
I DON'T THINK WE CAN...

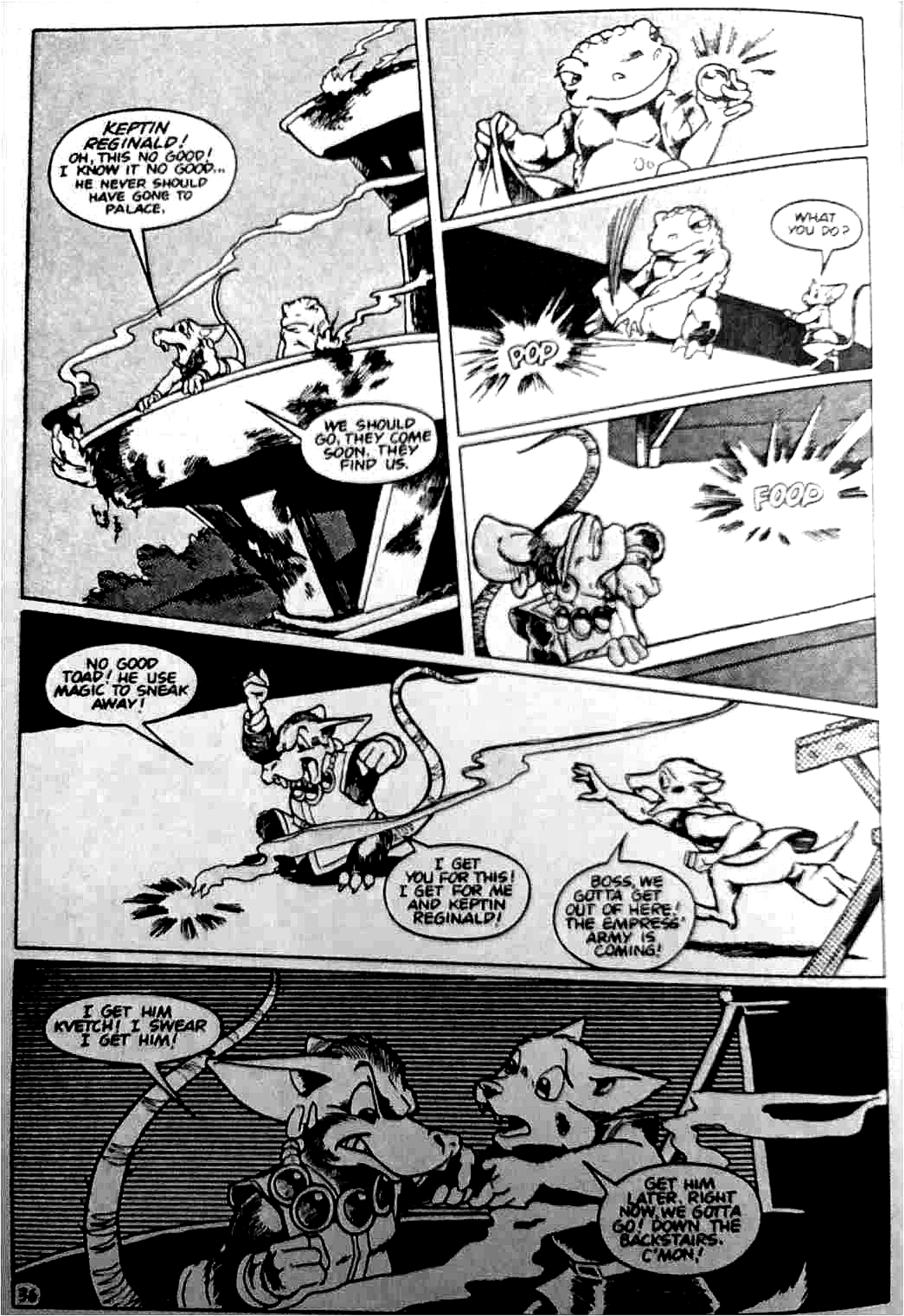
KINOMON... KINOMON, GET UP...
GET UP, KINOMON! THE EMPRESS NEEDS YOU! FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR BELOVED FIREPETAL, PLEASE WAKE UP!
...FIREPETAL...
YOU MUST KILL THE GRIFFEN. IN REGINALD'S LIFE DOES TYPHON'S POWER LIE! END THE LIFE, END THE MAGIC!
THE EMPRESS IS IN DANGER! YOU MUST GO TO HER!
FIRE'S NO GOOD...
EMPRESS...
MAKE YOUR BODY THE FLAME AND YOUR CLAWS SWORDS!
KILL THE GRIFFEN! MORE THAN HONOR IS AT STAKE NOW!
YES...

EMPRESS!
FFSSS!
SSSHHSH!
FFSSSH
YOUR FIRE IS USELESS, PRINCESS! BUT YOUR MAGIC COULD PROVE TROUBLESOME...
JOIN YOUR COMRADES ON THE GROUND!
THUMP
AAH!
SLAM
AFTER THREE CENTURIES OF WAITING, REVENGE IS SWEET. IN A SINGLE NIGHT I DESTROY NOT ONLY OCTAVIUS' DREAMS, BUT AN EMPIRE AS WELL...

WHAT...?
THAT LITTLE BASTARD'S STILL ALIVE! HOW ANNOYING!
TENACIOUS LITTLE HATCHLING! SURVIVE THIS... IF YOU CAN!
ZZZP
NOW! GODS, NOW! THERE IS NO SECOND CHANCE!
NARRICK!
NO! IMPOSSIBLE! HE CAN'T...
ARK
BAM
CRUNCH
WHAT... GODS, NO! KINOMON!!

KINO-CHAN!
FMPH
KLIK
TLK
WH-WHAT...?
THEY'RE FALLING APART! THEY'RE DYING!
AGAIN...
THAT MEANS HE'S DEAD! THE SORCERER'S DEAD! KINOMON KILLED HIM!
KINOMON!

MURDERER OF MY WIFE! ASSASSIN!
EASY, KINO. IT'S ALL OVER.
YOU DID IT. PLUME IS DEAD.
FIREPETAL CAN REST EASY NOW.
YEAH, WITHOUT YOU, WE'D BE DEAD AS THOSE SKELETONS BACK THERE!
...FIREPETAL...
C'EST BIEN. REST EASY, FRIEND. YOU'RE A HERO.
YEAH, DON'T GO AWAY.
YOU WAIT HERE. WE'LL GET THE OTHERS.


KEPTIN REGINALD! OH, THIS NO GOOD! I KNOW IT NO GOOD... HE NEVER SHOULD HAVE GONE TO PALACE.
WE SHOULD GO, THEY COME SOON. THEY FIND US.
WHAT YOU DO?
POP
FOOD
NO GOOD TOAD! HE USE MAGIC TO SNEAK AWAY!
I GET YOU FOR THIS! I GET FOR ME AND KEPTIN REGINALD!
BOSS, WE GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE! THE EMPRESS' ARMY IS COMING!
I GET HIM KVETCH! I SWEAR I GET HIM!
GET HIM LATER. RIGHT NOW WE GOTTA GO! DOWN THE BACKSTAIRS. C'MON!

ARE YOU INJURED, EMPRESS?
I'M FINE, KAJIKO. YOU'RE BLEEDING...
IT'S NOTHING. HAVE YOU SEEN KINOMON?
NO... I HAVEN'T.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR A DRAGON OF OUR ACQUAINTANCE, LADIES, HE'S OVER THERE!

KINOMON'S ALIVE?!

VERY MUCH SO! HE'S WAITING FOR YOU! THIS WAY!

WHERE IS HE?
GONE...
HE HEARD US COMING AND JUST... TOOK OFF.

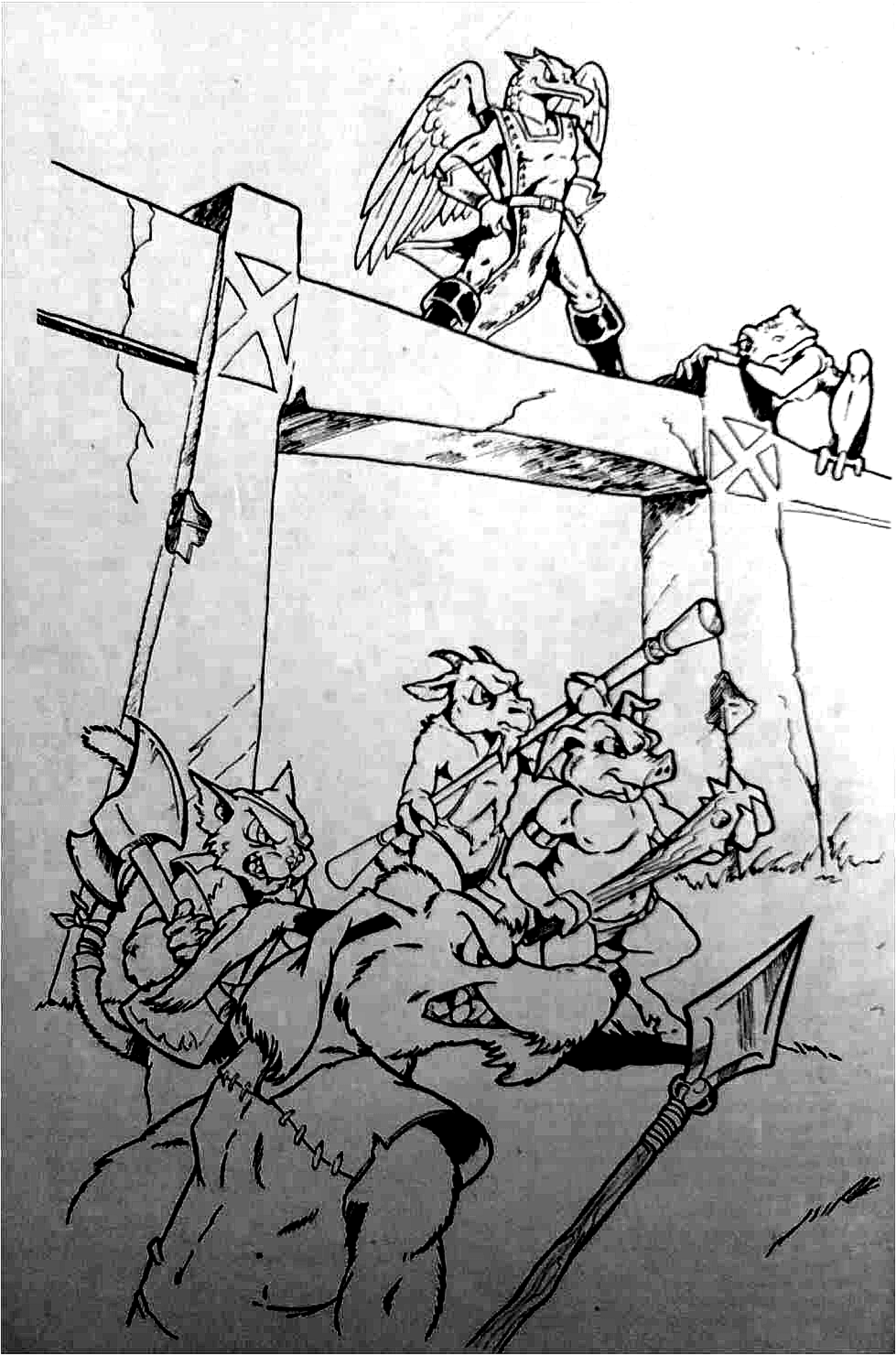
COME WITH US. THE EMPRESS WILL FIND A PLACE FOR YOU IN THE PALACE.

THANK YOU, BUT NO. IN THE PALACE, I'D ONLY BE A CURIOSITY. IN THE WALLOWS, I'M A KING. I INTEND TO STAY A THIEF UNTIL I'M THE EQUAL OF ANYONE IN XANADU.

ONLY THEN WILL I BE WORTHY OF YOU...
I'LL MISS YOU!
NOT TO WORRY, MY LOVE! I'LL BE THERE IF YOU NEED ME!

I WILL ABIDE BY YOUR WISHES, DEAR THIEF, ALTHOUGH I DON'T UNDERSTAND THEM. IN ANY CASE, I STILL ADMIRE YOUR AUDACITY. I MAY MAKE USE OF IT, FROM TIME TO TIME.

AND IF YOU SHOULD SEE A CERTAIN RELUCTANT DRAGON, DO TELL THAT A HERO'S WELCOME AWAITS HIM AT THE PALACE.

YOU'RE NUTS!
YOU COULD'A HAD A SOFT BED AND THREE SQUARES FOR LIFE! INSTEAD, YOU CHOOSE TO STAY IN THE WALLOWS! YOU'RE CERTIFIABLE, CAT!
YOU COULD HAVE GONE WITH THEM...

WHAT? AND MISS YOUR CHARMING COMPANY?